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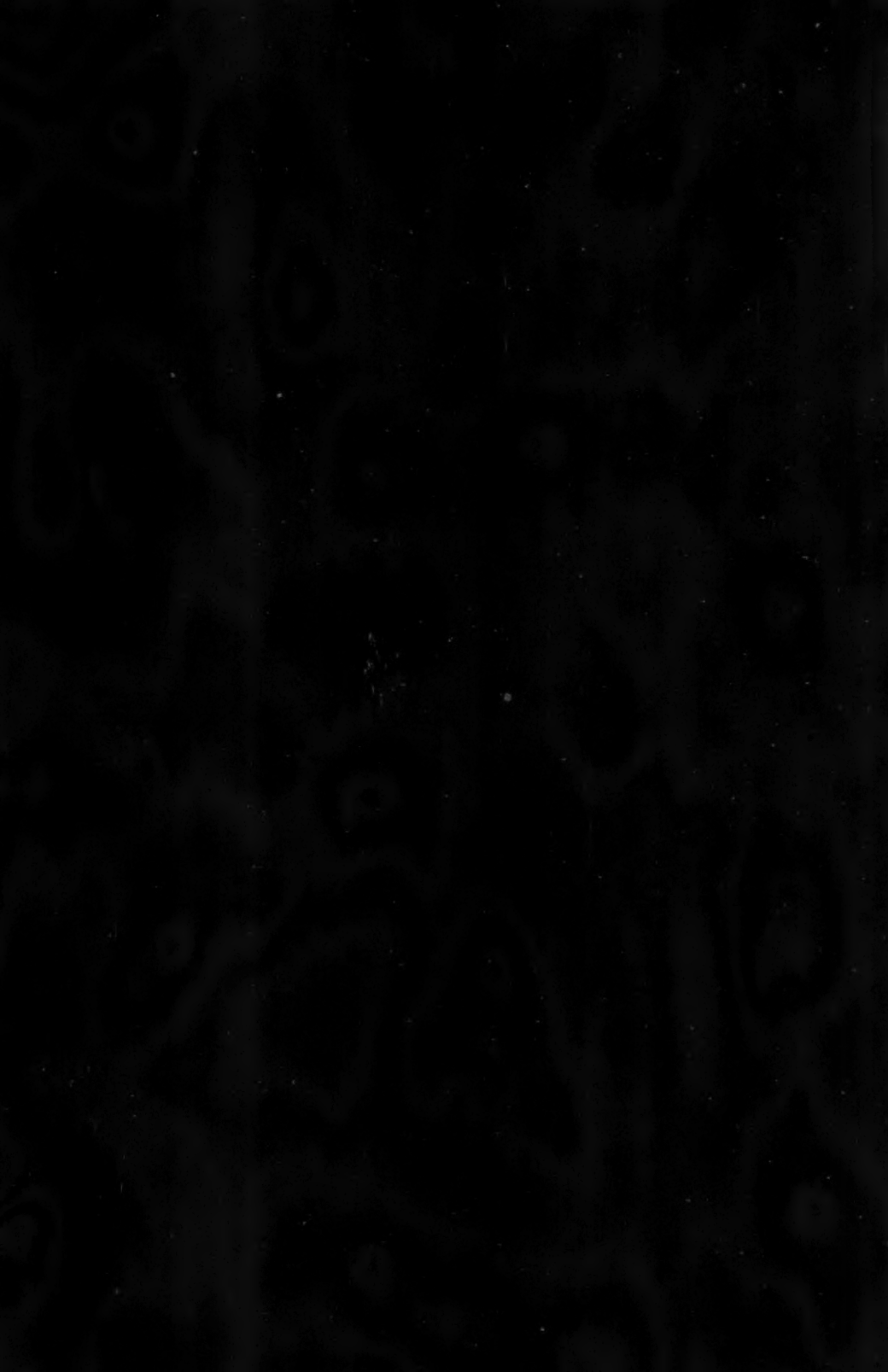
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# LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

MARCH 1885.

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# LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

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MARCH 1885.

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## *White Heather;*

A NOVEL.

BY WILLIAM BLACK.

### CHAPTER IX.

#### ENTICEMENTS.

AT about eleven o'clock on the same morning Miss Douglas was standing at the window of her own little room, looking rather absently at the familiar wintry scene without, and occasionally turning to a letter that she held in her hand, and that she had apparently just then written. Presently, however, her face brightened. There was a faint sound in the distance as of some one singing; no doubt that was Ronald; he would be coming along the road with the dogs; and if she were in any difficulty he would be the one to help. So she waited for a second or two—hoping to be able to signal to him to stop; and the next minute he was in sight, walking briskly with his long and steady stride, the small terrier at his heels, the other dogs—some handsome Gordon setters, a brace of pointers, and a big brown retriever—ranging further afield.

But why was it, she asked herself, that whenever he drew near her father's cottage, he invariably ceased his singing? Elsewhere, as well she knew, he beguiled the tedium of these lonely roads with an almost constant succession of songs and snatches of songs; but here he invariably became mute. And why did he not raise his eyes to the window—where she was waiting to give him a friendly wave of the hand, or even an invitation to stop and come within—

doors for a minute or two? No, on he went with that long stride of his, addressing a word now and again to one or other of the dogs, and apparently thinking of nothing else. So, as there was nothing for it now but to go out and intercept him on his return, she proceeded to put on her ulster and a close-fitting deer-stalker's cap; and thus fortified against the gusty north wind that was driving clouds and sunshine across the loch and along the slopes of Clebrig, she left the cottage, and followed the road that he had taken.

As it turned out, she had not far to go; for she saw that he was now seated on the parapet of the little bridge spanning the Mudal Water, and no doubt he was cutting tobacco for his pipe. When she drew near, he rose; when she drew nearer, he put his pipe in his waistcoat-pocket.

'Good-morning, Ronald!' she cried—and the pretty fresh-tinted face smiled on him, and the clear grey-blue Highland eyes regarded him in the most frank and friendly way, and without any trace, whatever of maiden bashfulness.

'Good-morning, Miss Douglas,' said he: he was far more shy than she was.

'What a stupid thing happened this morning,' said she. 'When I heard that the American gentleman was going south, I wanted to tell the driver to bring the children from Crask with him as he came back in the evening; and I sent Elizabeth round to the inn to tell him that; and then—what do you think!—they had started away half-an-hour before there was any need. But now I have written a letter to the Crask people, asking them to stop the waggonette as it comes back in the afternoon, and telling them that we will make the children very comfortable here for the night; and if only I could get it sent to Crask, everything would be arranged. And do you think now you could get one of the young lads to take it to Crask if I gave him a shilling?'

She took out her purse, and selected a shilling from the very slender store of coins there.

'It is not much for so long a walk,' she said, rather doubtfully. 'Eight miles there and eight back—is it enough, do you think?'

'Oh, I'll get the letter sent for ye, Miss Douglas, easily enough,' said he—and, indeed, he had already taken it from her hand.

Then she offered him the shilling; but with a little gesture he refused it. And then—for there flashed upon her mind a sudden suspicion that perhaps he might choose to walk all that

way himself just to please her (indeed, he had done things like that before)—she became greatly embarrassed.

‘Give me the letter, Ronald,’ said she, ‘and I will find some one myself. You are going away now with the dogs.’

‘Oh, no,’ said he, ‘I will see that the Crask folk get your message.’

‘And the money to pay the lad?’ said she, timidly.

‘Dinna bother your head wi’ that,’ he answered. ‘There’s enough money scattered about the place just now—the American gentleman was free-handed this morning. Ay, and there’s something I’ve got for you.’

‘For me?’ she said, with her eyes opening somewhat.

‘Well,’ said he (and very glad he was to have the letter safe and sound in his possession), ‘I was telling him about the children’s party to-morrow night; and he’s a friendly kind o’ man, that; he said he would like to have been at it, if he could have stayed; and I’m sure he would have got on wi’ them well enough, for he’s a friendly kind o’ man, as I say. Well, then, I couldna tell him the exact number o’ the bairns; but no matter what number, each one o’ them is to find sevenpence under the teacup—that’s a penny for each fish he got. Ay, he’s a shrewd-headed fellow, too; for says he “I suppose, now, the old people will be for having the children save up the sixpence; so at least they’ll have the penny to spend”; and he was curious even to find out where the bairns in a place like this got their toys, or if sweeties ever came their way. “It’s little enough of either o’ them,” I said to him, “they see, except when Miss Douglas has been to Lairg or Tongue”; and he was very anxious to make your acquaintance, I may tell ye, but he said he would wait till his daughter came with him the next time. I’m thinking the bairns will be pleased to find a little packet of money in the saucers; and it’s not too much for a man to pay for the luck o’ getting seven salmon in the middle of January—for who could have expected that?’

And then Meenie laughed.

‘It’s little you know, Ronald, what is in store for you to-morrow night. It will be the hardest night’s work you ever undertook in your life.’

‘I’m not afraid o’t,’ he answered, simply.

‘But you do not know yet.’

She opened her ulster and from an inside pocket produced the formidable document that she had shown to Ronald’s sister; and then she buttoned the long garment again; and contentedly sate

herself down on the low stone parapet, the programme in her hand. And now all trace of embarrassment was fled from her; and when she spoke to him, or smiled, those clear frank eyes of hers looked straight into his, fearing nothing, but only expecting a welcome. She did not (as he did) continually remember that she was Miss Douglas, the doctor's daughter, and he merely a smart young deerstalker. To her he was simply Ronald—the Ronald that every one knew and liked; who had a kind of masterful way throughout this neighbourhood, and was arbiter in all matters of public concern; but who, nevertheless, was of such amazing good nature that there was no trouble he would not undertake to gratify her slightest wish. And as he was so friendly and obliging towards her, she made no doubt he was so to others; and that would account for his great popularity, she considered; and she thought it was very lucky for this remote little hamlet that it held within it one who was capable of producing so much good feeling, and keeping the social atmosphere sweet and sound.

As for him, he met this perfect friendship of hers with a studied respect. Always, if it was on the one side 'Ronald,' on the other it was 'Miss Douglas.' Why, her very costume was a bar to more familiar relations. At this moment, as she sate on the stone parapet of the bridge, looking down at the document before her, and as he stood at a little distance, timidly awaiting what she had to say, it occurred to him again, as it had occurred before, that no matter what dress it was, each one seemed to become her better than any other. What was there particular in a tight-fitting grey ulster and a deerstalker's cap?—and yet there was grace there, and style, and a nameless charm. If one of the lasses at the inn, now, were sent on an errand on one of these wild and blustering mornings, and got her hair blown about, she came back looking untidy; but if Miss Douglas had her hair blown about, so that bits and curls of it got free from the cap or the velvet hat, and hung lightly about her forehead or her ears or her neck, it was a greater witchery than ever. Then everything seemed to fit her so well and so easily; and to be so simple; and always leaving her—however it was so managed—perfect freedom of movement, so that she could swing a child on to her shoulder, or run after a truant, or leap from bank to bank of a burn without disturbing in the least that constant symmetry and neatness. To Ronald it was all a wonder; and there was a still further wonder always seeming to accompany her and surround her. Why was it that the bleakest winter day, on these desolate Sutherland

moors, suddenly grew filled with light when he chanced to see a well-known figure away along the road—the world changing into a joyful thing, as if the summer were already come, and the larks singing in the blue? And when she spoke to him, there was a kind of music in the air; and when she laughed—why, Clebrig, and Ben Loyal, and the whispering Mudal Water seemed all to be listening and all to be glad that she was happy and pleased. She was the only one, other than himself, that the faithful Harry would follow; and he would go with her wherever she went, so long as she gave him an occasional word of encouragement.

‘Will I read you the programme, Ronald?’ said she, with just a trace of mischief in the grey-blue eyes. ‘I’m sure you ought to hear what has to be done, for you are to be in the chair, you know.’

‘Me?’ said he in astonishment. ‘I never tried such a thing in my life.’

‘Oh, yes,’ she said, cheerfully. ‘They tell me you are always at the head of the merry-makings; and is not this a simple thing? And besides, I do not want any other grown people—I do not want Mr. Murray—he is a very nice man—but he would be making jokes for the grown-up people all the time. I want nobody but you and Maggie and myself besides the children, and we will manage it very well, I am sure.’

There was a touch of flattery in the proposal.

‘Indeed, yes,’ said he, at once. ‘We will manage well enough, if ye wish it that way.’

‘Very well, then,’ said she, turning with a practical air to the programme. ‘We begin with singing Old Hundred, and then the children will have tea and cake—and the sixpence and the penny. And then there is to be an address by the Chairman—that’s you, Ronald.’

‘Bless me, lassie!’ he was startled into saying; and then he stammered an apology, and sought safety in a vehement protest against the fancy that he could make a speech—about anything whatever.

‘Well, that is strange,’ said Meenie, looking at him, and rather inclined to laugh at his perplexity. ‘It is a strange thing if you cannot make a little speech to them; for I have to make one—at the end. See, there is my name.’

He scarcely glanced at the programme.

‘And what have you to speak about, Miss Douglas?’

She laughed.

‘About you.’

‘About me?’ he said, rather aghast.

‘It is a vote of thanks to the chairman—and easy enough it will be, I am sure. For I have only to say about you what I hear every one say about you; and that will be simple enough.’

The open sincerity of her friendship—and even of her liking for him—was so apparent that for a second or so he was rather bewildered. But he was not the kind of man to misconstrue frankness; he knew that was part of herself; she was too generous, too much inclined to think well of everybody; and the main point to which he had to confine himself was this, that if she, out of her good-nature, could address a few words to those children—about him or any other creature or object in the world—it certainly behoved him to do his best also, although he had never tried anything of the kind before. And then a sudden fancy struck him; and his eyes brightened eagerly.

‘Oh, yes, yes,’ he said, ‘I will find something to say. I would make a bad hand at a sermon; but the bairns have enough o’ that at times; I dare say we’ll find something for them o’ another kind—and they’ll no be sorry if it’s short. I’m thinking I can find something that’ll please them.’

And what was this that was in his head?—what but the toast of the Mistress of the Feast! If Meenie had but known, she would doubtless have protested against the introduction of any mutual admiration society into the modest hamlet of Inver-Mudal; but at the moment she was still scanning the programme.

‘Now you know, Ronald,’ she said, ‘it is to be all quiet and private; and that is why the grown-up people are to be kept out except ourselves. Well, then, after they have had raisins handed round, you are to sing “My love she’s but a lassie yet”—that is a compliment to the little ones; and then I will read them something; and then you are to sing “O dinna cross the burn, Willie”—I have put down no songs that I have not heard you sing. And then if you would play them “Lord Breadalbane’s March” on the pipes—’

She looked up again, with an air of apology.

‘Do you think I am asking too much from you, Ronald?’ she said.

‘Indeed not a bit,’ said he, promptly. ‘I will play or sing for them all the night long, if you want; and I’m sure it’s much better we should do it all ourselves, instead o’ having a lot o’ grown-up folk to make the bairns shy.’

‘It is not the Chairman, anyway, that will make them shy—’

if what they say themselves is true,' said Meenie, very prettily; and she folded up her programme and put it in her pocket again.

She rose; and he whistled in the dogs, as if he would return to the village.

'I thought you were taking them for a run,' said she.

'Oh, they have been scampering about; I will go back now.'

Nor did it occur to her for a moment that she would rather not walk back to the door of her mother's house with him. On the contrary, if she had been able to attract his notice when he passed, she would have gone down to the little garden-gate, and had this conversation with him in view of all the windows. If she wanted him to do anything for her, she never thought twice about going along to his cottage, and knocking at the door; or she would, in the event of his not being there, go on to the inn and ask if any one had seen Ronald about. And so on this occasion she went along the road with him in much good-humour; praising the dogs, hoping the weather would continue fine, and altogether in high spirits over her plans for the morrow.

However, they were not to part quite so pleasantly. At the small garden-gate, and evidently awaiting them, stood Mrs. Douglas; and Ronald guessed that she was in no very good temper. In truth, she seldom was. She was a doll-like little woman, rather pretty, with cold clear blue eyes, fresh-coloured cheeks, and quite silver-white hair which was carefully curled and braided—a pretty little old lady, and one to be petted and made much of, if only she had had a little more amiability of disposition. But she was a disappointed woman. Her big good-natured husband had never fulfilled the promise of his early years, when, in a fit of romance, she married the penniless medical student whom she had met in Edinburgh. He was not disappointed at all; his life suited him well enough; he was excessively fond of his daughter Meenie, and wanted no other companion when she was about; after the hard work of making a round of professional visits in that wild district, the quiet and comfort and neatness of the little cottage at Inver-Mudal were all that he required. But it was far otherwise with the once ambitious little woman whom he had married. The shadow of the dignity of the Stuarts of Glengask still dwelt over her; and it vexed her that she had nothing with which to overawe the neighbours or to convince the passing stranger of her importance. Perhaps if she had been of commanding figure, that might have helped her, however poor her circumstances might be; as it was, being but five feet two

inches in height—and rather toy-like, withal—everything seemed against her. It was but little use her endeavouring to assume a majestic manner when her appearance was somehow suggestive of a glass case; and the sharpness of her tongue, which was considerable, seemed to be but little heeded even in her own house, for both her husband and her daughter were persons of an easy good humour, and rather inclined to pet her in spite of herself.

‘Good morning, Mrs. Douglas,’ Ronald said, respectfully, and he raised his cap as they drew near.

‘Good morning, Mr. Armstrong,’ she said, with much precision, and scarcely glancing at him.

She turned to Meenie.

‘Williamina, how often have I told you to shut the gate after you when you go out?’ she said, sharply. ‘Here has the cow been in again.’

‘It cannot do much harm at this time of the year,’ Meenie said, lightly.

‘I suppose if I ask you to shut the gate, that is enough? Where have you been? Idling, I suppose. Have you written to Lady Stuart to thank her for the Birthday Book?’

It seemed to Ronald (who wished to get away, but could scarcely leave without some civil word of parting) that she referred to Lady Stuart in an unmistakeably clear tone. She appeared to take no notice of Ronald’s presence; but she allowed him to hear that there was such a person as Lady Stuart in existence.

‘Why, mother, it only came yesterday, and I haven’t looked over it yet,’ Meenie said.

‘I think when her ladyship sends you a present,’ observed the little woman, with severe dignity, ‘the least you can do is to write and thank her at once. There are many who would be glad of the chance. Go in and write the letter now.’

‘Very well, mother,’ said Meenie, with perfect equanimity; and then she called ‘Good morning, Ronald!’ and went indoors.

What was he to do to pacify this imperious little dame? As a gamekeeper, he knew but the one way.

‘Would a hare or two, or a brace of ptarmigan be of any use to you, Mrs. Douglas?’ said he.

‘Indeed,’ she answered, with much dignity, ‘we have not had much game of any kind of late, for at Glengask they do not shoot any of the deer after Christmas.’

This intimation that her cousin, Sir Alexander, was the owner of a deer-forest might have succeeded with anybody else. But

alas ! this young man was a keeper, and very well he knew that there was no forest at all at Glengask, though occasionally in October they might come across a stag that had been driven forth, or they might find two or three strayed hinds in the woods later on ; while, if Mrs. Douglas had but even one haunch sent her in the year—say at Christmas—he considered she got a very fair share of whatever venison was going at Glengask. But of course he said nothing of all this.

‘Oh, very well,’ said he, ‘I’m thinking o’ getting two or three o’ the lads to go up the hill for a hare-drive one o’ these days. The hares ’ll be the better o’ some thinning down—on one or two o’ the far tops ; and then again, when we’ve got them it’s no use sending them south—they’re no worth the carriage. So if ye will take a few o’ them, I’m sure you’re very welcome. Good morning, ma’am.’

‘Good morning,’ said she, a little stiffly, and she turned and walked towards the cottage.

As for him, he strode homeward with right good will ; for Meenie’s letter was in his pocket ; and he had forthwith to make his way to Crask—preferring not to place any commission of hers in alien hands. He got the dogs kenneled up—all except the little terrier ; he slung his telescope over his shoulder ; and took a stick in his hand. ‘Come along, Harry, lad, ye’ll see your friends at Crask ere dinner time, and if ye’re well-behaved, ye’ll come home in the waggonette, along wi’ the bairns.’

It was a brisk and breezy morning ; the keen north wind was fortunately behind him ; and soon he was swinging along through the desolate solitudes of Strath Terry, his footfall on the road the only sound in the universal stillness. And yet not the only sound, for sometimes he conversed with Harry, and sometimes he sent his clear tenor voice ringing over the wide moorland, and startling here or there a sheep, the solitary occupant of these wilds. For no longer had he to propitiate that domineering little dame ; and the awful shadow of Glengask was as nothing to him ; the American, with his unsettling notions, had departed ; here he was at home, his own master, free in mind, and with the best of all companions trotting placidly at his heels. No wonder his voice rang loud and clear and contented :—

“ ‘Tis not beneath the burgonet,  
Nor yet beneath the crown,  
’Tis not on couch of velvet,  
Nor yet on bed of down.”

Harry, lad, do ye see that hoodie? Was there ever such impudence? I could maist kill him with a stone. But I'll come along and pay a visit to the gentleman ere the month's much older :—

*“’Tis beneath the spreading birch,  
In the dell without a name,  
Wi’ a bonnie, bonnie lassie,  
When the kye come hame.”*

What think ye o’ that now?—for we’ll have to do our best to-morrow night to please the bairns. Ah, you wise wee deevil!—catch you drinking out o’ a puddle when ye see any running water near.

*“When the kye come hame, when the kye come hame,  
Twist the gloaming and the mirk, when the kye come hame.”*

## CHAPTER X.

### HIGH FESTIVAL.

A CHILDREN’S tea-party in a Highland barn sounds a trivial sort of affair; and, as a spectacle, would doubtless suffer in contrast with a fancy-dress ball in Kensington or with a State concert at Buckingham Palace. But human nature is the important thing, after all, no matter what the surroundings may be; and if one considers what the ordinary life of these children was—the dull monotony of it in those far and bleak solitudes; their ignorance of pantomime transformation-scenes; their lack of elaborately illustrated fairy tales, and similar aids to the imagination enjoyed by more fortunate young people elsewhere—it was surely an interesting kind of project to bring these bairns away from the homely farm or the keeper’s cottage, in the depth of mid-winter, and to march them through the blackness of a January evening into a suddenly opening wonderland of splendour and colour and festivity. They were not likely to remember that this was but a barn—this beautiful place, with its blazing candelabras, and its devices of evergreens and great white and red roses, and the long table sumptuously set forth, and each guest, sitting down, finding himself or herself a capitalist to the extent of sevenpence. And so warm and comfortable the lofty building was; and so brilliant and luminous with those circles of candles; and the loud strains of

the pipes echoing through it—giving them a welcome just as if they were grown-up people: no wonder they stared mostly in silence at first, and seemed awestruck, and perhaps were in doubt whether this might not be some Cinderella kind of feast, that they might suddenly be snatched away from—and sent back again through the cold and the night to the far and silent cottage in the glen. But this feeling soon wore off; for it was no mystical fairy—though she seemed more beautiful and gracious and more richly attired than any fairy they had ever dreamed about—who went swiftly here and there and everywhere, arranging their seats for them, laughing and talking with them, forgetting not one of their names, and as busy and merry and high-spirited as so great an occasion obviously demanded.

Moreover, is it not in these early years that ideals are unconsciously being formed—from such experiences as are nearest?—ideals that in after-life may become standards of conduct and aims. They had never seen anyone so gentle-mannered as this young lady who was at once their hostess and the little mother of them all, nor any one so dignified, and yet so simple and good-humoured and kind. They could not but observe with what marked respect Ronald Strang (a most important person in their eyes) treated her—insisted on her changing places with him, lest she should be in a draught when the door was opened, and not allowing her to touch the teapots that came hot and hot from the kitchen, lest she should burn her fingers; he pouring out the tea himself, and rather clumsily too. And if their ideal of sweet and gracious womanhood (supposing it to be forming in their heads) was of but a prospective advantage, was there not something of a more immediate value to them in thus being allowed to look on one who was so far superior to the ordinary human creatures they saw around them? She formed an easy key to the few imaginative stories they were familiar with. Cinderella, for example: when they read how she fascinated the prince at the ball, and won all hearts and charmed all eyes, they could think of Miss Douglas, and eagerly understand. The Queen of Sheba, when she came in all her splendour: how were these shepherds' and keepers' and crofters' children to form any notion of her appearance but by regarding Miss Douglas in this beautiful and graceful attire of hers? In point of fact, her gown was but of plain black silk; but there was something about the manner of her wearing it that had an indefinable charm; and then she had a singularly neat collar and a pretty ribbon round her neck; and

there were slender silver things gleaming at her wrists from time to time. Indeed there was no saying for how many heroines of history or fiction Miss Meenie Douglas had unconsciously to herself to do duty—in the solitary communings of a summer day's herding, or during the dreary hours in which these hapless little people were shut up in some small, close, overcrowded parish church, supposing that they lived anywhere within half-a-dozen miles of such a building: now she would be Joan of Arc, or perhaps Queen Esther that was so surpassing beautiful, or Lord Ullin's daughter that was drowned within sight of Ulva's shores. And was it not sufficiently strange that this same magical creature, who represented to them everything that was noble, and beautiful, and refined, and queen-like, should now be moving about amongst them, cutting cake for them, laughing, joking, patting this one or that on the shoulder, and apparently quite delighted to wait on them and serve them?

The introductory singing of the Old Hundredth Psalm was, it must be confessed, a failure. The large majority of the children present had never either heard or seen a piano; and when Meenie went to that strange-looking instrument (it had been brought over from her mother's cottage with considerable difficulty) and when she sate down and struck the first deep resounding chords—and when Ronald, at his end of the table, led off the singing with his powerful tenor voice—they were far too much interested and awestruck to follow. Meenie sang, in her quiet, clear way, and Maggie timidly joined in; but the children were silent. However, as has already been said, the restraint that was at first pretty obvious very soon wore off; the tea and cake were consumed amid much general hilarity and satisfaction; and when in due course the Chairman rose to deliver his address, and when Miss Douglas tapped on the table to secure attention, and also by way of applause, several of the elder ones had quite enough courage and knowledge of affairs to follow her example, so that the speaker may be said to have been received with favour.

And if there were any wise ones there, whose experience had taught them that tea and cake were but a snare to entrap innocent people into being lectured and sermonised, they were speedily reassured. The Chairman's address was mostly about starlings, and jays, and rabbits, and ferrets, and squirrels; and about the various ways of taming these, and teaching them; and of his own various successes and failures when he was a boy. He had to

apologise at the outset for not speaking in the Gaelic; for he said that if he tried they would soon be laughing at him; he would have to speak in English; but if he mentioned any bird or beast whose name they did not understand, they were to ask him, and he would tell them the Gaelic name. And very soon it was clear enough that this was no lecture on the wanderings of the children of Israel, nor yet a sermon on justification by faith: the eager eyes of the boys followed every detail of the capture of the nest of young ospreys; the girls were like to cry over the untimely fate of a certain tame sparrow, that had strayed within the reach—or the spring, rather—of an alien cat; and general laughter greeted the history of the continued and uncalled-for mischiefs and evil deeds of one Peter, a squirrel but half reclaimed from its savage ways, that had cost the youthful naturalist much anxiety and vexation, and also not a little blood. There was, moreover, a dark and wild story of revenge—on an ill-conditioned cur that was the terror of the whole village, and was for ever snapping at girls' ankles and boys' legs—a most improper and immoral story to be told to young folks; though the boys seemed to think the ill-tempered beast got no more than it deserved. That small village, by the way, down there in the Lothians, seemed to have been a very remarkable place; the scene of the strangest exploits and performances on the part of terriers, donkeys, pet kittens, and tame jackdaws; haunted by curious folk, too, who knew all about bogles, and kelpies, and such uncanny creatures, and had had the most remarkable experiences of them (though modern science was allowed to come in here for a little bit, with its cold-blooded explanations of the supernatural). And when, to finish up this discursive and apparently aimless address, he remarked that the only thing lacking in that village where he had been brought up, and where he had observed all these incidents and wonders, was the presence of a kind-hearted and generous young lady, who, on an occasion, would undertake all the trouble of gathering together the children for miles around, and would do everything she could to make them perfectly happy, they knew perfectly well whom he meant; and when he said, in conclusion, that, if they knew of any such an one about here, in Inver-Mudal, and if they thought that she had been kind to them, and if they wished to show her that they were grateful to her for her goodness, they could not do better than give her three loud cheers, the lecture came to an end in a perfect storm of applause; and Meenie—blushing a little, and yet laughing—

had to get up and say that she was responsible for the keeping of order by this assembly, and would allow no speech-making and no cheering that was not put down in the programme.

After this there was a service of raisins; and in the general quiet that followed, Mr. Murray came into the room, just to see how things were going on. Now the innkeeper considered himself to be a man of a humorous turn; and when he went up to shake hands with Miss Douglas, and looked down the long table, and saw Ronald presiding at the other end, and her presiding at this, and all the children sitting so sedately there, he remarked to her in his waggish way—

‘Well, now, for a young married couple, you have a very large family.’

But Miss Douglas was not a self-conscious young person, nor easily alarmed; and she merely laughed and said—

‘I am sure they are a very well-behaved family indeed.’

But Ronald (who had not heard the jocosely remark, by the way) objected to any one coming in to claim Miss Douglas’s attention on so important an occasion; and in his capacity of Chairman he rose and rapped loudly on the table.

‘Ladies and gentlemen,’ he said, ‘we’re no going to have any idlers here the night. Any one that bides with us must do something. I call on Mr. Murray to sing his well-known song, “Bonnie Peggie, O.”’

‘Indeed no, indeed no,’ the innkeeper said, instantly retreating to the door. ‘There iss too many good judges here the night. I’ll leave you to yourselves; but if there’s anything in the inn you would like sent over, do not be afraid to ask for it, Ronald. And the rooms for the children are all ready, and the beds; and we’ll make them very comfortable, Miss Douglas, be sure of that now.’

‘It’s ower soon to talk about that yet,’ Ronald said, when the innkeeper had gone; and he drove home the wooden bolt of the door, so that no other interloper should get in. Meenie had said she wanted no outsiders present; that was enough.

And then they set about getting through the programme—the details of which need not be repeated here. Song followed song; when there was any pause, Meenie played simple airs on the piano; for ‘The Cameronian’s Dream,’ when it came to her turn to read them something, she substituted ‘The Pied Piper of Hamelin,’ which was listened to with breathless interest. Even the little Maggie did her part in the ‘Huntingtower’ duet very

creditably—fortified by the knowledge that there were no critics present. And as for the children, they had become quite convinced that there was to be no sermon; and that they were not to be catechised about their lessons; nor examined as to the reasons annexed to the Fourth Commandment; all care was gone from them; for the moment life was nothing but short-bread and raisins and singing, with admiration of Miss Douglas's beautiful hair, and beautiful, kind eyes, and soft and laughing voice.

And then, as the evening wore on, it became time to send these young people to the beds that had been prepared for them at the inn; and of course they could not break up without singing 'Auld Lang Syne'—Meenie officiating at the piano, and all the others standing up and joining hands. And then she had to come back to the table to propose a vote of thanks to the Chairman. Well, she was not much abashed. Perhaps there was a little extra colour in her face at the beginning; and she said she had never tried to make a speech before; and, indeed, that now there was no occasion, for that all of them knew Ronald (so she called him, quite naturally) and knew that he was always willing to do a kindness when he was asked. And she said that he had done a great deal more than had been originally begged of him; and they ought all of them, including herself, to be very grateful to him; and if they wished to give him a unanimous vote of thanks, they were all to hold up their right hand—as she did. So that vote was carried; and Ronald said a few words in reply—mostly about Miss Douglas, in truth, and also telling them to whom they were indebted for the money found in each saucer. Then came the business of finding wraps for them and muffling them up ere they went out into the January night (though many a one there was all unused to such precautions, and wondering that Miss Douglas should be so careful of them), while Ronald, up at the head of the room, was playing them a parting salute on the pipes—*Caidil gu lo*, it was, which means 'Sleep on till day.' Finally, when Maggie and Meenie were ushering their small charges through the darkness to the back-door of the inn, he found himself alone; and, ere putting out the candles and fastening up, he thought he might as well light a pipe—for that solace had been denied him during the long evening.

Well, he was staring absently into the mass of smouldering peats, and thinking mostly of the sound of Meenie's voice as he had heard it when she sang with the children 'Whither, pilgrims,

are you going?', when he heard footsteps behind him, and, turning, found that both Meenie and Maggie had come back.

'Ronald,' said Meenie, with her pretty eyes smiling at him, 'do you know that Maggie and I are rather tired——'

'Well, I dinna wonder,' said he.

'Yes, and both of us very hungry too. And I am sure there will be no supper waiting for either Maggie or me when we go home; and do you think you could get us some little thing now?'

'Here?' said he, with his face lighting up with pleasure: were those three to have supper all by themselves?

'Oh, yes,' said she, in her friendly way. 'I am not sure that my mother would like me to stay at the inn for supper; but this is our own place; and the table laid; and Maggie and I would rather be here, I am sure. And you—are you not hungry too—after so long a time—I am sure you want something besides raisins and shortbread. But if it will be any trouble——'

'Trouble or no trouble,' said he, quickly, 'has nothing to do wi't. Here, Maggie, lass, clear the end of the table; and we'll soon get some supper for ye.'

And away he went to the inn, summoning the lasses there, and driving and hurrying them until they had arranged upon a large tray a very presentable supper—some cold beef, and ham, and cheese, and bread, and ale; and when the fair-haired Nelly was ready to start forth with this burden, he lit a candle and walked before her through the darkness, lest she should miss her footing. And very demure was Nelly when she placed this supper on the table; there was not even a look for the smart young keeper; and when Meenie said to her—

'I hear, Nelly, you had great goings-on on Monday night'

—she only answered—

'Oh, yes, miss, there was that'—

—and could not be drawn into conversation, but left the moment she had everything arranged.

But curiously enough, when the two girls had taken their seats at this little cross table, Ronald remained standing—just behind them, indeed, as if he were a waiter. And would Miss Douglas have this? and would Miss Douglas have that? he suggested—mostly to cloak his shamefacedness; for indeed that first wild assumption that they were all to have supper together was banished now as an impertinence. He would wait on them, and gladly; but—but his own supper would come after.

'And what will you have yourself, Ronald?' Meenie asked.

'Oh,' said he, 'that will do by-and-by. I am not so hungry as you.'

'Did you have so much of the shortbread?' said she, laughing

He went and stirred up the peats—and the red glow sent a genial warmth across towards them.

'Come, Ronald,' said the little Maggie, 'and have some supper.'

'There is no hurry,' he said, evasively. 'I think I will go outside and have a pipe now; and get something by-and-by.'

'I am sure,' said Meenie, saucily, 'that it is no compliment to us that you would rather go away and smoke. See, now, if we cannot tempt you.'

And therewith, with her own pretty fingers, she made ready his place at the table; and put the knife and fork properly beside the plate; and helped him to a slice of beef and a slice of ham; and poured some ale into his tumbler. Not only that, but she made a little movement of arranging her dress which was so obviously an invitation that he should there and then take a place by her, that it was not in mortal man to resist; though, indeed, after sitting down, he seemed to devote all his attention to looking after his companions. And very soon any small embarrassment was entirely gone; Meenie was in an unusually gay and merry mood—for she was pleased that her party had been so obviously a success, and all her responsibilities over. And this vivacity gave a new beauty to her face; her eyes seemed more kind than ever; when she laughed, it was a sweet low laugh, like the cooing of pigeons on a summer afternoon.

'And what are you thinking of, Maggie?' she said, suddenly turning to the little girl, who had grown rather silent amid this talking and joking.

'I was wishing this could go on for ever,' was the simple answer.

'What? A perpetual supper? Oh, you greedy girl! Why, you must be looking forward to the Scandinavian heaven——'

'No, it's to be with Ronald and you, Meenie dear—just like now—for you seem to be able to keep everybody happy.'

Miss Douglas did blush a little at this; but it was an honest compliment, and it was soon forgotten. And then, when they had finished supper, she said—

'Ronald, do you know that I have never played an accom-

paniment to one of your songs? Would you not like to hear how it sounds?’

‘But—but I’m not used to it—I should be putting you wrong—’

‘No, no; I’m sure we will manage. Come along,’ she said, briskly. ‘There is that one I heard you sing the other day—I heard you, though you did not see me—“Gae bring to me a pint o’ wine, and fill it in a silver tassie; that I may drink, before I go, a service to my bonnie lassie”—and very proud she was, I suppose. Well, now, we will try that one.’

So they went to the other end of the barn, where the piano was; and there was a good deal of singing there, and laughing, and joking—among this little party of three. And Meenie sang too—on condition (woman-like) that Ronald would light his pipe. Little Maggie scarcely knew which to admire the more—this beautiful and graceful young lady, who was so complaisant and friendly and kind, or her own brother, who was so handsome, and manly, and modest, and yet could do everything in the world. Nor could there have been any sinister doubt in that wish of hers that these three should always be together as they were then; how was she to know that this was the last evening on which Meenie Douglas and Ronald were to meet on these all too friendly terms?

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## CHAPTER XI.

### A REVELATION.

EARLY the next morning, when as yet the sunrise was still widening up and over the loch, and the faint tinge of red had not quite left the higher slopes of Clebrig, Ronald had already finished his breakfast, and was in his own small room, smoking the customary pipe, and idly—and with some curious kind of whimsical amusement in his brain—turning over the loose sheets of scribbled verses. And that was a very ethereal and imaginary Meenie he found there—a Meenie of lonely hill-side wanderings—a Meenie of day-dreams and visions: not the actual, light-hearted Meenie of the evening before, who was so merry after the children had gone, and so content with the little supper-party of three, and would have him smoke his pipe without regard to her pretty silk dress. This Meenie on paper was rather a wistful, visionary, distant creation; whereas the Meenie of the previous evening was

altogether friendly and good-humoured and laughing, with the quaintest mother-ways in the management of the children, and always a light of kindness shining in her clear Highland eyes. He would have to write something to pourtray Meenie (to himself) in this more friendly and actual character. He could do it easily enough, he knew. There never was any lack of rhymes, when Meenie was the occasion. At other things he had to labour—frequently, indeed, until, reflecting that this was not his business, he would fling the thing into the fire, and drive it into the peats with his heel, and go away with much content. But when Meenie was in his head, everything came readily enough; all the world around seemed full of beautiful things to compare with her: the birds were singing of her; the mountains were there to guard her; the burn, as it whispered through the rushes, or danced over the open bed of pebbles, had but the one continual murmur of Meenie's name. Verses? he could have written them by the score—and laughed at them, and burned them, too.

Suddenly the little Maggie appeared.

'Ronald,' she said, 'the Doctor's come home.'

'What—at this time in the morning?' he said, turning to her.

'Yes, I am sure; for I can see the dog-cart at the door of the inn.'

'Well, now,' said he, hastily snatching up his cap, 'that is a stroke of luck—if he will come with us. I will go and meet him.'

But he need not have hurried so much; the dog-cart was still at the door of the inn when he went out; and indeed remained there as he made his way along the road. The Doctor, who was a most sociable person, had stopped for a moment to hear the news; but Mr. Murray happened to be there, and so the chat was a protracted one. In the meantime Ronald's long swinging stride soon brought him into their neighbourhood.

'Good morning, Doctor!' he cried.

'Good morning, Ronald,' said the other, turning round. He was a big man, somewhat corpulent, with an honest, wholesome, ruddy face, soft brown eyes, and an expressive mouth, that could temper his very apparent good nature with a little mild sarcasm.

'You've come back in the nick of time,' the keeper said—for well he knew the Doctor's keen love of a gun. 'I'm thinking of driving some of the far tops the day, to thin down the hares a bit; and I'm sure ye'd be glad to lend us a hand.'

'Man, I was going home to my bed, to tell ye the truth,' said the Doctor; 'it's very little sleep I've had the last ten days.'

'What is the use of that?' said Ronald, 'there's aye plenty o' time for sleep, in the winter.'

And then the heavy-framed occupant of the dog-cart glanced up at the far-reaching heights of Clebrig, and there was a grim smile on his mouth.

'It's all very well,' said he, 'for herring-stomached young fellows like you to face a hill like that; but I've got weight to carry, man; and——'

'Come, come, Doctor; it's no the first time you've been on Clebrig,' Ronald said—he could see that Meenie's father wanted to be persuaded. 'Besides, we'll no try the highest tops up there—there's been too much snow. And I'll tell ye how we'll make it easy for ye; we'll row ye down the loch and begin at the other end and work home—there, it's a fair offer.'

It was an offer, at all events, that the big Doctor could not withstand.

'Well, well,' said he, 'I'll just drive the dog-cart along and see how they are at home; and then if the wife lets me out o' her clutches, I'll come down to the loch-side as fast as I can.'

Ronald turned to one of the stable-lads (all of whom were transformed into beaters on this occasion).

'Jimmy, just run over to the house and fetch my gun; and bid Maggie put twenty cartridges—number 4, she knows where they are—into the bag; and then ye can take the gun and the cartridge-bag down to the boat—and be giving her a bale-out till I come down. I'm going along to the farm, to get two more lads if I can; tell the Doctor I'll no be long after him, if he gets down to the loch first.'

Some quarter of an hour thereafter they set forth; and a rough pull it was down the loch, for the wind was blowing hard, and the waves were coming broadside on. Those who were at the oars had decidedly the best of it, for it was bitterly cold; but even the others did not seem to mind much—they were chiefly occupied in scanning the sky-line of the hills (a habit that one naturally falls into in a deer country) while Ronald and the Doctor, seated in the stern, were mostly concerned about keeping their guns dry. In due course of time they landed, made their way through a wood of young birch-trees, followed the channel of a burn for a space, and by-and-by began to reach the upper slopes, where the plans for the first drive were carefully drawn out and explained.

Now it is unnecessary to enter into details of the day's achieve-

ments, for they were neither exciting, nor difficult, nor daring. It was clearly a case of shooting for the pot; although Ronald, in his capacity of keeper, was anxious to have the hares thinned down, knowing well enough that the over-multiplying of them was as certain to bring in disease as the over-stocking of a mountain farm with sheep. But it may be said that the sport, such as it was, was done in a workmanlike manner. In Ronald's case, each cartridge meant a hare—and no praise to him, for it was his business. As for the Doctor, he was not only an excellent shot, but he exercised a wise and humane discretion as well. Nothing would induce him to fire at long range on the off-chance of hitting; and this is all the more laudable in the shooting of mountain-hares, for these, when wounded, will frequently dodge into a hole among the rocks, like a rabbit, baffling dogs and men, and dying a miserable death. Moreover, there was no need to take risky shots. The two guns were posted behind a stone or small hillock—lying at full length on the ground, only their brown-capped heads and the long barrels being visible. Then the faint cries in the distance became somewhat louder—with sticks rattled on rocks, and stones flung here and there; presently, on the sky-line of the plateau, a small object appeared, sitting upright and dark against the sky; then it came shambling leisurely along—becoming bigger and bigger, and whiter and whiter every moment, until at length it showed itself almost like a cat, but not running stealthily like a cat, rather hopping forward on its ungainly high haunches; and then again it would stop and sit up, its ears thrown back, its eyes not looking at anything in front of it, its snow-white body, with here and there a touch of bluish-brown, offering a tempting target for a pea-rifle. But by this time, of course, numerous others had come hopping over the sky-line; and now as the loud yells and shouts and striking of stones were close at hand, there was more swift running, instead of hobbling and pausing, among the white frightened creatures; and as they cared for nothing in front (in fact a driven hare cannot see anything that is right ahead of it, and will run against your boots if you happen to be standing in the way), but sped noiselessly across the withered grass and hard clumps of heather—bang! went the first barrel, and then another and another, as quick as fingers could unload and reload, until here, there, and everywhere—but always within a certain radius from the respective posts—a white object lay on the hard and wintry ground. The beaters came up to gather them together; the two guns had

risen from their cold quarters ; there were found to be thirteen hares all told—a quite sufficient number for this part—and not one had crawled or hobbled away wounded.

But we will now descend for a time from these bleak altitudes and return to the little hamlet—which seemed to lie there snugly enough and sheltered in the hollow, though the wind was hard on the dark and driven loch. Some hour or so after the shooters and beaters had left, Meenie Douglas came along to Ronald's cottage, and, of course, found Maggie the sole occupant, as she had expected. She was very bright and cheerful and friendly, and spoke warmly of Ronald's kindness in giving her father a day's shooting.

'My mother was a little angry,' she said, laughing, 'that he should go away just the first thing after coming home ; but you know, Maggie, he is so fond of shooting ; and it is not always he can get a day, especially at this time of the year ; and I am very glad he has gone ; for you know there are very few who have to work so hard.'

'I wish they may come upon a stag,' said the little Maggie—with reckless and irresponsible generosity.

'Do you know, Maggie,' said the elder young lady, with a shrewd smile on her face, 'I am not sure that my mother likes the people about here to be so kind ; she is always expecting my father to get a better post—but I know he is not likely to get one that will suit him as well with the fishing and shooting. There is the Mudal—the gentlemen at the lodge let him have that all the spring through ; and when the loch is not let, he can always have a day by writing to Mr. Crawford ; and here is Ronald, when the hinds have to be shot at Christmas, and so on. And if the American gentleman takes the shooting as well as the loch, surely he will ask my father to go with him a day or two on the hill ; it is a lonely thing shooting by one's-self. Well, now, Maggie, did you put the curtains up again in Ronald's room ?'

'Yes, I did,' was the answer, 'and he did not tear them down this time, for I told him you showed me how to hang them ; but he has tied them back so that they might just as well not be there at all. Come and see, Meenie, dear.'

She led the way into her brother's room ; and there, sure enough, the window-curtains (which were wholly unnecessary, by the way, except from the feminine point of view, for there was certainly not too much light coming in by the solitary window)

had been tightly looped and tied back, so that the view down the loch should be unimpeded.

‘No matter,’ said Meenie; ‘the window is not so bare-looking as it used to be. And I suppose he will let them remain up now.’

‘Oh, yes, when he was told that you had something to do with them,’ was the simple answer.

Meenie went to the wooden mantelpiece, and put the few things there straight, just as she would have done in her own room, blowing the light white peat-dust off them, and arranging them in neater order.

‘I wonder, now,’ she said, ‘he does not get frames for these photographs; they will be spoiled by finger-marks, and the dust.’

Maggie said, shyly—

‘That was what he said to me the other day—but no about these—about the one you gave me of yourself. He asked to see it; and I showed him how careful I was in wrapping it up; but he said no—the first packman that came through I was to get a frame, if he had one, and glass, too; or else that he would send it in to Inverness to be framed. But you know, Meenie, it’s no near so nice-looking—or anything, anything like so nice-looking—as you are.’

‘Nothing could be that, I am sure,’ said Meenie, lightly; and she was casting her eyes about the room, to see what further improvements she could suggest.

But Maggie had grown suddenly silent; and was standing at the little writing-table, apparently transfixed with astonishment. It will be remembered that when Ronald, in the morning, heard that the Doctor was at the door of the inn, he had hurriedly hastened away to intercept him; and that, subsequently, in order to save time, he had sent back a lad for his gun and cartridges, while he went on to the farm. And it was this last arrangement that caused him to overlook the fact that he had left his writing materials—the blotting-pad and everything—lying exposed on the table; a piece of neglect of which he had scarcely ever before been guilty. And as ill-luck would have it, as Maggie was idly wandering round the room, waiting for Meenie to make any further suggestions for the smartening of it, what must she see lying before her, among these papers, but a letter, boldly and conspicuously addressed?

‘Well!’ she exclaimed, as she took it up. ‘Meenie, here is a letter for you! why didna he send it along to you?’

‘A letter for me?’ Meenie said, with a little surprise. ‘No! why should Ronald write a letter to me?—I see him about every day.’

‘But look!’

Meenie took the letter in her hand; and regarded the address; and laughed.

‘It is very formal,’ said she. ‘There is no mistake about it. “Miss Wilhelmina Stuart Douglas”—when was I ever called that before? And “Inver-Mudal, Sutherlandshire, N.B.” He should have added *Europe*, as if he was sending it from the moon. Well, it is clearly meant for me, any way—oh, and open, too—’

Well, the next minute all the careless amusement fled from her face; her cheeks grew very white; and a frightened, startled look sprang to her eyes. She but caught the first few lines—

*‘O wilt thou be my dear love?’*

*(Meenie and Meenie)*

*O wilt thou be my ain love?*

*(My sweet Meenie)’*

and then it was with a kind of shiver that her glance ran over the rest of it; and her heart was beating so that she could not speak; and there was a mist before her eyes.

‘Maggie,’ she managed to say at length—and she hurriedly folded up the paper again and placed it on the table with the others—‘I should not have read it—it was not meant for me—it was not meant that I should read it—come away, come away, Maggie.’

She took the younger girl out of the room, and herself shut the door, firmly, although her fingers were all trembling.

‘Maggie,’ she said, ‘you must promise never to tell any one that you gave me that letter—that I saw it—’

‘But what is the matter, Meenie, dear?’ the smaller girl said, in bewilderment, for she could see by the strange half-frightened look of Miss Douglas’s face that something serious had happened.

‘Well, it is nothing—it is nothing,’ she forced herself to say. ‘It will be all right. I shouldn’t have read the letter—it was not meant for me to see—but if you say nothing about it, no harm will be done. That’s all; that’s all. And now I am going to see if the children are ready that are to go by the mail-car.’

‘But I will go with you, Meenie.’

Then the girl seemed to recollect herself; and she glanced round at the interior of the cottage, and at the little girl, with a curious kind of look.

'No, no, not this morning, Maggie,' she said. 'You have plenty to do. Good-bye—good-bye!' And she stooped and kissed her, and patted her on the shoulder, and left, seeming anxious to get away and be by herself.

Maggie remained there in considerable astonishment. What had happened? Why should she not go to help with the children? and why good-bye—when Meenie would be coming along the road in less than an hour, as soon as the mail-car had left? And all about the reading of something contained in that folded sheet of paper. However, the little girl wisely resolved that, whatever was in that letter, she would not seek to know it, nor would she speak of it to any one, since Meenie seemed so anxious on that point; and so she set about her domestic duties again—looking forward to the end of these, and the resumption of her knitting of her brother's jersey.

Well, the winter's day went by, and they had done good work on the hill. As the dusk of the afternoon began to creep over the heavens, they set out for the lower slopes on their way home; and very heavily weighted the lads were with the white creatures slung over their backs on sticks. But the dusk was not the worst part of this descent; the wind was now driving over heavy clouds from the north; and again and again they would be completely enveloped, and unable to see anywhere more than a yard from their feet. In these circumstances Ronald took the lead; the Doctor coming next, and following, indeed, more by sound than by sight; the lads bringing up the wake in solitary file, with their heavy loads thumping on their backs. It was a ghostly kind of procession; though now and again the close veil around them would be rent in twain, and they would have a glimpse of something afar off—perhaps a spur of Ben Loyal, or the dark waters of Loch Meidie studded with its small islands. Long before they had reached Inver-Mudal black night had fallen; but now they were on easier ground; and at last the firm footing of the road echoed to their measured tramp, as the invisible company marched on and down to the warmth and welcome lights of the inn.

The Doctor, feeling himself something of a truant, did not stay, but went on to his cottage; but the others entered the inn; and as Ronald forthwith presented Mrs. Murray with half-a-dozen of the hares, the landlord was right willing to call for ale for the beaters, who had had a hard day's work. Nor was Ronald in a hurry to get home; for he heard that Maggie was awaiting

him in the kitchen ; and so he and Mr. Murray had a pipe and a chat together, as was their custom. Then he sent for his sister.

'Well, Maggie, lass,' said he, as they set out through the dark, 'did you see all the bairns safely off this morning?'

'No, Ronald,' she said, 'Meenie did not seem to want me ; so I stayed at home.'

'And did ye find Harry sufficient company for ye? But I suppose Miss Douglas came and stayed with ye for a while.'

'No, Ronald,' said the little girl, in a tone of some surprise, 'she has not been near the house the whole day, since the few minutes in the morning.'

'Oh,' said he, lightly, 'she may have been busy, now her father is come home. And ye maun try and get on wi' your lessons as well as ye can, lass, without bothering Miss Douglas too much ; she canna always spend so much time with ye.'

The little girl was silent. She was thinking of that strange occurrence in the morning of which she was not to speak ; and in a vague kind of way she could not but associate that with Meenie's absence all that day, and also with the unusual tone of her 'good-bye.' But yet, if there were any trouble, it would speedily pass away. Ronald would put everything right. Nobody could withstand him—that was the first and last article of her creed. And so, when they got home, she proceeded cheerfully enough to stir up the peats, and to cook their joint supper in a manner really skilful for one of her years ; and she laid the cloth ; and put the candles on the table ; and had the tea and everything ready. Then they sate down ; and Ronald was in very good spirits, and talked to her, and tried to amuse her. But the little Maggie rather wistfully looked back to the brilliant evening before, when Meenie was with them ; and perhaps wondered whether there would ever again be a supper-party as joyful and friendly and happy as they three had been when they were all by themselves in the big, gaily lit barn.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### 'WHEN SHADOWS FALL.'

THE deer-shed adjoining the kennels was a gloomy place, with its bare walls, its lack of light, and its ominous-looking cross-beams, ropes, and pulley for hanging up the slain deer ; and the morning

was dark and lowering, with a bitter wind howling along the glen, and sometimes bringing with it a sharp smurr of sleet from the northern hills. But these things did not seem to affect Ronald's spirits much as he stood there, in his shirt-sleeves, and bare-headed, sorting out the hares that were lying on the floor, and determining to whom and to whom such and such a brace or couple of brace should be sent. Four of the plumpest he had already selected for Mrs. Douglas (in the vague hope that the useful present might make her a little more placable), and he was going on with his choosing and setting aside—sometimes lighting a pipe—sometimes singing carelessly—

*O we aft hae met at e'en, bonnie Peggie, O,  
On the banks o' Cart sae green, bonnie Peggie, O,  
Where the waters smoothly rin,  
Far aneath the roarin' linn,  
Far frae busy strife and din, bonny Peggie, O'*

—when the little Maggie came stealing in.

'Ronald,' she said, with an air of reproach, 'why are ye going about on such a morning without your jacket, and bare-headed, too?'

'Toots, toots, lassie, it's a fine morning,' said he, indifferently.

'It was Meenie said I was not to let you do such foolish things,' the little lass ventured to say, diffidently.

Of course, this put a new aspect on the case; but he would not admit as much directly.

'Oh, well,' said he, 'if you bring me out my coat and bonnet I will put them on, for I'm going down to the Doctor's with two or three of the hares.'

And then she hesitated.

'Ronald,' said she, 'I will take them to Mrs. Douglas, if you like.'

'You?' said he.

'For I would give them to her with a nice message from you; and—and—if you take them, you will say nothing at all; and where is the compliment?'

He laughed.

'Ye're a wise little lass; but four big hares are heavy to carry—with the wind against ye; so run away and get me my coat and my Glengarry; and I will take them along myself, compliment or no compliment.'

However, as it turned out, Mrs. Douglas was not the first of

the family he was fated to meet that morning. He had scarcely left the deer-shed when he perceived Meenie coming along the road; and this was an auspicious and kindly event; for somehow the day seemed to go by more smoothly and evenly and contentedly when he had chanced to meet Meenie in the morning, and have a few minutes' chat with her about affairs in general, and an assurance that all was going well with her. So he went forward to meet her with a light heart; and he thought she would be pleased that he was taking the hares to her mother; and perhaps, too, he considered that they might be a little more frank in their friendship, after the exceeding good-fellowship of the night of the children's party.

He went forward unsuspectingly.

'Good morning, Miss Douglas!' said he, slackening in his pace, for naturally they always stopped for a few seconds or minutes when they met thus.

But to his astonishment Miss Douglas did not seem inclined to stay. Her eyes were bent on the ground as she came along; she but timidly half lifted them as she reached him; and 'Good morning, Ronald!' she said, and would have passed on. And then it seemed as if, in her great embarrassment, she did not know what to do. She stopped; her face was suffused with red; and she said hurriedly—and yet with an effort to appear unconcerned—

'I suppose Maggie is at home?'

'Oh, yes,' said he, and her manner was so changed that he also scarce knew what to say, or to think.

And again she was going on, and again she lingered—with a sudden fear that she might be thought ungracious or unkind.

'The children all got away safely yesterday morning,' said she—but her eyes never met his; and there was still tell-tale colour in her cheeks.

'So I heard,' he answered.

'I am sure they must have enjoyed the evening,' she said, as if forcing herself to speak.

And then it suddenly occurred to him—for this encounter had been all too brief and bewildering for any proper understanding of it—that perhaps her mother had been reproving her for being too friendly with the people about the inn and with himself, and that he was only causing her embarrassment by detaining her, and so he said—

'Oh, yes, I'm sure o' that. Well, good morning, Miss

Douglas ; I'm going along to give your mother these two or three hares.'

'Good morning,' said she—still without looking at him—and then she went.

And he, too, went on his way; but only for a brief space; presently he sate down on the low stone dyke by the road-side, and dropped the hares on the ground at his feet. What could it all mean? She seemed anxious to limit their acquaintanceship to the merest formalities; and yet to be in a manner sorry for having to do so. Had he unwittingly given her some cause of offence? He began to recall the minutest occurrences of the night of the children's party—wondering if something had then happened to account for so marked a change? But he could think of nothing. The supper-party of three was of her own suggestion; she could not be angry on that account. Perhaps he ought to have asked this person or that person over from the inn to join them, for the sake of propriety? Well, he did not know much about such matters; it seemed to him that they were very happy as they were; and that it was nobody else's business. But would she quarrel with him on that account? Or on account of his smoking in her presence? Again and again he wished that his pipe had been buried at the bottom of the loch; and indeed his smoking of it that evening had given him no enjoyment whatever, except in so far as it seemed to please her; but surely, in any case, that was a trifle? Meenie would not suddenly become cold and distant (in however reluctant a way) for a small matter like that? Nor could she be angry with him for taking her father away for a day on the hill; she was always glad when the Doctor got a day's shooting from anybody. No; the only possible conclusion he could come to was that Mrs. Douglas had more strongly than ever disapproved of Meenie's forming friendships among people not of her own station in life; and that some definite instructions had been given, which the girl was anxious to obey. And if that were so, ought he to make it any the more difficult for her? He would be as reserved and distant as she pleased. He knew that she was a very kindly and sensitive creature; and might dread giving pain; and herself suffer a good deal more than those from whom she was in a measure called upon to separate herself. That was a reason why it should be made easy for her; and he would ask Maggie to get on with her lessons by herself, as much as she could; and when he met Miss Douglas on the road, his greeting of her would be of the briefest—and yet with as much

kindness as she chose to accept, in a word or a look. And if he might not present her with the polecat's skin that was now just about dressed?—well, perhaps the American gentleman's daughter would take it, and have it made into something, when she came up in March.

The pretty, little, doll-like woman, with the cold eyes and the haughty stare, was at the front-door of the cottage, scattering food to the fowls.

'I have brought ye two or three hares, Mrs. Douglas, if they're of any use to ye,' Ronald said, modestly.

'Thank you,' said she, with lofty courtesy, 'thank you; I am much obliged. Will you step in and sit down for a few minutes?—I am sure a little spirits will do you no harm on such a cold morning.'

In ordinary circumstances he would have declined that invitation; for he had no great love of this domineering little woman, and much preferred the society of her big, good-natured husband; but he was curious about Meenie, and even inclined to be resentful, if it appeared that she had been dealt with too harshly. So he followed Mrs. Douglas into the dignified little parlour—which was more like a museum of cheap curiosities than a room meant for actual human use; and forthwith she set on the crimson-dyed table-cover a glass, a tumbler, a jug of water, and a violet-coloured bulbous glass bottle with an electro-plated stopper. Ronald was bidden to help himself; and also, out of her munificence, she put before him a little basket of sweet biscuits.

'I hear the Doctor is away again,' Ronald said—and a hundred times would he rather not have touched the violet bottle at all, knowing that her clear, cold, blue eyes were calmly regarding his every movement.

'Yes,' she said, 'to Tongue. There is a consultation there. I am sure he has had very little peace and quiet lately.'

'I am glad he had a holiday yesterday,' Ronald said, with an endeavour to be agreeable.

But she answered severely—

'It might have been better if he had spent the first day of his getting back with his own family. But that has always been his way; everything sacrificed to the whim of the moment—to his own likings and dislikings.'

'He enjoys a day's sport as much as any man I ever saw,' said he—not knowing very well what to talk about.

'Yes, I dare say,' she answered, shortly.

Then she pushed the biscuits nearer him; and returned to her

attitude of observation, with her small, neat, white hands crossed on her lap, the rings on the fingers being perhaps just a little displayed.

‘Miss Douglas is looking very well at present,’ he said, at a venture.

‘Williamina is well enough—she generally is,’ she said, coldly. ‘There is never much the matter with her health. She might attend to her studies a little more, and do herself no harm. But she takes after her father.’

There was a little sigh of resignation.

‘Some of us,’ said he, good-naturedly, ‘were expecting her to come over on Monday night to see the dancing.’

But here he had struck solid rock. In a second—from her attitude and demeanour—he had guessed why it was that Meenie had not come over to the landlord’s party: a matter about which he had not found courage to question Meenie herself.

‘Williamina,’ observed the little dame, with a magnificent dignity, ‘has other things to think of—or ought to have, at her time of life, and in her position. I have had occasion frequently of late to remind her of what is demanded of her; she must conduct herself not as if she were for ever to be hidden away in a Highland village. It will be necessary for her to take her proper place in society, that she is entitled to from her birth and her relatives; and of course she must be prepared—of course she must be prepared. There are plenty who will be willing to receive her; it will be her own fault if she disappoints them—and us, too, her own parents. Williamina will never have to lead the life that I have had to lead, I hope; she belongs by birth to another sphere; and I hope she will make the most of her chances.’

‘Miss Douglas would be made welcome anywhere, I am sure,’ he ventured to say; but she regarded him with a superior look—as if it were not for him to pronounce an opinion on such a point.

‘Soon,’ she continued—and she was evidently bent on impressing him, ‘she will be going to Glasgow, to finish in music and German, and to get on with her Italian: you will see she has no time to lose in idle amusement. We would send her to Edinburgh or to London; but her sister being in Glasgow is a great inducement; and she will be well looked after. But indeed Williamina is not the kind of girl to go and marry a penniless student; she has too much common sense; and besides she has seen how it turns out. Once in a family is enough. No; we count on her making a good marriage, as the first step towards her taking the

position to which she is entitled; and I am sure that Lady Stuart will take her in hand, and give her every chance. As for their taking her abroad with them—and Sir Alexander almost promised as much—what better could there be than that?—she would be able to show off her acquirements and accomplishments; she would be introduced to the distinguished people at the Ministerial receptions and balls; she would have her chance, as I say. And with such a chance before her, surely it would be nothing less than wicked of her to fling away her time in idle follies. I want her to remember what lies before her; a cottage like this is all very well for me—I have made my bed and must lie on it; but for her—who may even be adopted by Lady Stuart—who knows? for stranger things have happened—it would be downright madness to sink into content with her present way of life.'

'And when do you think that M—that Miss Douglas will be going away to Glasgow?' he asked—but absently, as it were, for he was thinking of Inver-Mudal, and Clebrig, and Loch Loyal, and Strath-Terry, and of Meenie being away from them all.

'That depends entirely on herself,' was the reply. 'As soon as she is sufficiently forward all round for the finishing lessons, her sister is ready to receive her.'

'It will be lonely for you with your daughter away,' said he.

'Parents have to make sacrifices,' she said. 'Yes, and children too. And better they should make them while they are young than all through the years after. I hope Williamina's will be no wasted life.'

He did not know what further to say: he was dismayed, perplexed, down-hearted, or something: if this was a lesson she had meant to read him, it had struck home. So he rose and took his leave; and she thanked him again for the hares; and he went out, and found Harry awaiting him on the doorstep. Moreover, as he went down to the little gate, he perceived that Meenie was coming back—she had been but to the inn with a message; and, obeying some curious kind of instinct, he turned to the left—pretending not to have seen her coming; and soon he was over the bridge, and wandering away up the lonely glen whose silence is broken only by the whispering rush of Mudal Water.

He wandered on and on through the desolate moorland, on this wild and blustering day, paying but little heed to the piercing wind or the driven sleet that smote his eyelids. And he was not so very sorrowful; his common sense had told him all

this before ; Rose Meenie, Love Meenie, was very well in secret fancies and rhymes and verses ; but beyond that, she was nothing to him. But what would Clebrig do, and Mudal Water, and all the wide, bleak country that had been brought up in the love of her, and was saturated with the charm of her presence, and seemed for ever listening in deathlike silence for the light music of her voice ? There were plenty of verses running through his head on this wild day too ; the hills and the clouds and the January sky were full of speech ; and they were all of them to be bereft of her as well as he :—

*Mudal, that comes from the lonely loch,  
Down through the moorland russet and brown,  
Know you the news that we have for you ?—  
Meenie's away to Glasgow town.*

*See Ben Clebrig, his giant front  
Hidden and dark with a sudden frown ;  
What is the light of the valley to him,  
Since Meenie's away to Glasgow town ?*

*Empty the valley, empty the world,  
The sun may arise and the sun go down ;  
But what to do with the lonely hours,  
Since Meenie's away to Glasgow town ?*

*Call her back, Clebrig ! Mudal, call !  
Ere all of the young Spring time be flown ;  
Birds, trees, and blossoms—you that she loved—  
O summon her back from Glasgow town !*

‘ *Call her back, Clebrig ! Mudal, call !* ’ he repeated to himself as he marched along the moorland road ; for what would they do without some one to guard, and some one to watch for, and some one to listen for, in the first awakening of the dawn ? Glasgow—the great and grimy city—that would be a strange sort of guardian, in the young Spring days that were coming, for this fair Sutherland flower. And yet might not some appeal be made even there—some summons of attention, as it were ?

*O Glasgow town, how little you know  
That Meenie has wandered in  
To the very heart of your darkened streets,  
Through all the bustle and din.*

## WHITE HEATHER.

*A Sutherland blossom shining fair  
Amid all your dismal haze,\*  
Forgetting the breath of the summer hills,  
And the blue of the northern days.*

*From Dixon's fire-wreaths to Rollox stalk,  
Blow, south wind, and clear the sky,  
Till she think of Ben Clebrig's sunny slopes,  
Where the basking red-deer lie.*

*Blow, south wind, and show her a glimpse of blue  
Through the pall of dusky brown;  
And see that you guard her and tend her well,  
You, fortunate Glasgow Town!*

But then—but then—that strange, impossible time—during which there would be no Meenie visible anywhere along the mountain roads; and Mudal Water would go by unheeded; and there would be no careless, clear-singing girl's voice along Loch Naver's shores—that strange time would surely come to an end, and he could look forward and see how the ending of it would be:

*The clouds lay heavy on Clebrig's crest,  
For days and weeks together;  
The shepherds along Strath-Terry's side  
Cursed at the rainy weather;  
They scarce could get a favouring day  
For the burning of the heather.*

*When sudden the clouds were rent in twain  
And the hill laughed out to the sun;  
And the kins stole up, with wondering eyes,  
To the far slopes yellow and dun;  
And the birds were singing in every bush  
As at Spring anew begun.*

*O Clebrig, what is it that makes you glad,  
And whither is gone your frown?  
Are you looking afar into the south,  
The long, wide strath adown?  
And see you that Meenie is coming back—  
Love Meenie, from Glasgow town!*

He laughed. Not yet was Love Meenie taken away from them all. And if in the unknown future the Stuarts of Glengask and Orosay were to carry her off and make a great lady of her, and take her to see strange places, and perhaps marry her to some

noble person, at least in the meantime Ben Clebrig and Ben Loyal and the wide straths between knew that they still held in the mighty hollow of their hand this sweet flower of Sutherlandshire, and that the world and the skies and the woods and lakes seemed fairer because of her presence. And as regarded himself, and his relations with her? Well, what must be must. Only he hoped—and there was surely no great vanity, nor self-love, nor jealousy in so modest a hope—that the change of her manner towards him was due to the counsels of her mother rather than to anything he had unwittingly said or done. Rose Meenie—Love Meenie—he had called her in verses; but always he had been most respectful to herself; and he could not believe that she thought him capable of doing anything to offend her.

*(To be continued.)*

## *A March Evening.*

THE boughs are black, the wind is cold,  
 And cold and black the fading sky;  
 And cold and ghostly, fold on fold,  
 Across the hills the vapours lie.

Sad is my heart, and dim mine eye,  
 With thoughts of all the woes that were;  
 And all that through the forward year,  
 Prophetic, flit like phantoms by.

But, in the cheerless silence, hark,  
 Some throstle's vesper! loud and clear,  
 Beside his mate I hear him sing;

And, sudden at my feet I mark  
 A daffodil that lights the dark—  
 Joy, joy, 'tis here, the spring, the spring!

GEORGE MILNER.

## *King Solomon ben David and the Players at the Chess.*

**K**ING SOLOMON BEN DAVID, the Wise, on whom be peace, was a mighty player at the chess before the Lord. And he sent unto Vaphres, King of Egypt, and Nabonassar, King of Babylon, and Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, and unto others of the kings round about, whether they were friends or whether they were enemies; Hadad, King of Edom; Hiram, King of Tyre; and Reson, King of Damascus, who alone of the princes of Syria refused to bend the knee to the King of Israel, saying, 'Greeting from my lord Solomon, King of Israel, who desireth to play with thee at the chess. And whosoever among ye is minded to play with me at the chess, either I will come unto him, or otherwise, if he will, he shall come to me at the House of Millo, in Jerusalem; and if he win of me a game, he shall have ten of the cities of Israel of them that are nighest his own borders; but an if he lose, he shall forfeit me ten cities of those of his own country that are nighest the land of Israel.' And King Vaphres, which is Pharaoh, and the other kings played with King Solomon, and the Lord gave King Solomon the upper hand of them all, so that he gat fifty walled cities beyond the borders of Israel, and made broad the borders of Israel from the river Euphrates unto the land of Egypt, so that he ruled all the kingdoms, as it is written, even from Tiphseh unto Uzzah.

And it came to pass after a time that there was no man so bold that he durst adventure to play King Solomon at the chess unless he should give him the advantage, as three of the foot soldiers, or an elephant, or a camel of the right hand and a knight of the left, or the like. And all of his viziers and all the poets and musicians of the Temple he made aweary of their lives because of disappointment. For he would say, 'O, such an one, do thou play me at the chess, and I will give thee three or four, as it might be, of my fighting men; and if thou win the game of me I will give thee a garment of brodered work of Hind worth a thousand pieces of gold, or a sword of the steel of Cathay with

a hilt wrought of a single emerald, such as no king hath in his treasury, or a charger of the colts of the dams of Arabia by the steeds of the sea. So they played at the chess with the King, and when he had won the game of any of them, then would he laugh and say, 'Behold, I leave thee thy robe, for it is not meet for a king to take aught of his servants,' and he bade fill him wine that he might forget the bitterness of his heart.

But after a time it came to pass that the King was weary of playing with his viziers and the poets and musicians of the Temple, and his judges, and the captains of his guard, and would fain find out others, whose manner of play he knew not, to play against him at the chess. But the dread of the King was sore in the hearts of them that he called to play against him, and he said, 'Behold, they are all daunted by the terror of my wisdom, and I have no glory of all my skill; for though the gazelle be fleet of foot than the leopard, yet ever the leopard leapeth on to the neck of the gazelle. Now therefore will I disguise my countenance, and they that play against me shall not know that they play against King Solomon.'

So he called unto him his chief vizier, Zabud ben Na, the King's friend, and at eventide they stained their faces and put on garments as they had been merchants from Ophir, and went forth into the streets of the city. And at the corner of the King's Avenue which is before the House of Millo, they met a stranger of comely conditions clad in a rich garment of Baalbek, walking slowly as one perplexed, not lifting his eyes from the ground. And Solomon said, 'Peace be upon thee, O brother.'

And the stranger answered and said, 'Peace be upon thee, O brother, from the Lord of Peace, the One, the Merciful.'

And Solomon said, 'Who art thou, and whither goest thou, for meseemeth thou art a stranger in the streets of the city?'

And the stranger said, 'Men call me Jareb ben Othniel, and Vaphres, King of Egypt, this long time hath entertained me in his palace as one of his boon companions, for I am a poet and musician after his own heart; and even now am I come unto Jerusalem as a messenger unto Jehoshaphat ben Abiud, King Solomon's remembrancer, with whom I must needs be before midnight.'

Then said Solomon, 'It wanteth yet some hours of midnight; come with us in the meanwhile to our lodging, and let us pass the time with wine and music.'

'I will well,' said Jareb. And when they came into the lodg-

ing King Solomon had prepared Zabud let call for wine, and they made merry.

Then said King Solomon, 'Let bring the tables, that thou and I may play a bout at the chess, and then shalt thou sing us a song of them that delight the heart of King Pharaoh.'

Then Jareb said, 'Sweet is the song that closeth the eyes of the sleepless in sleep, and giveth ease to the sick man who crieth aloud for the soreness of his pain. When he heareth my voice, the slave remembereth not his chain nor the outcast his poverty; the toiler layeth aside his work and the angry man his wrath. Yea, to hearken to my music the lover leaveth to dote upon his mistress's bosom, and the mother forsaketh her only son at the mouth of the pit. But as for playing at the chess at this time, I pray thee hold thy servant excused, for the One Merciful, to whom be glory, hath laid a burden on thy servant, so that he cannot lose a game at the chess even if he so would, and haply if he win a game of thee thou wilt be an-angered, and he should seem ungrateful in thine eyes for this grace that thou hast shown him.'

Then Solomon laughed, and spake within himself, 'This minstrel is of the children of Eblis the braggart, and the Lord hath given him into my hands that I may put his boasting to shame. Surely I will win a game of him and pull his robe over his head, and then shall be given him a lute wherewith to comfort the sadness of his spirit.'

But the King's lips spake otherwise than the thought that was in his heart, and he said, 'Blessed be thou, Jareb ben Othniel! I would fain lose a game at the chess unto thee, and, behold, I give thee this cloak of mine own in earnest of thy victory.'

And therewithal he set upon him his cloak, which was of stuff of Tyre, apparelled with lynx's fur, worth a hundred pieces of gold.

Then Zabud let call for tables, and King Solomon played at the chess with Jareb ben Othniel; and King Solomon's men were of the white and Jareb's of the black. And Jareb played without thought, as one that could but little of the chess, so that in a brief space King Solomon had taken prisoner both his elephants and a knight and a camel, besides four of his foot soldiers, while Jareb had taken but one foot soldier of King Solomon.

And Solomon said within himself, 'There is no glory in playing with a foolish lutanist such as this. Shall leviathan put forth his strength against the gadfly? I will contrive a combination and make an end of him.' So he made a combination and took his captain.

Then Jareb rose up and made as though he would go. And Solomon said unto him, 'Whither away? for the game is not yet played out.'

Then Jareb said, 'O my lord, King Solomon, when thou walkest abroad, the herbs of the field, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop on the wall, find themselves a tongue to tell thee of their several virtues, yet hast thou not heard the voice of these chess men. See now and behold: if thy servant should move yonder foot soldier on to the next square, where would my lord the King be then? Verily thy servant knoweth nought as of playing at the chess, yet knoweth he more withal than my lord King Solomon.'

And Solomon looked at the tables, and behold if his adversary should play his foot soldier on to the next square the King was checkmated without redress.

And when he understood that his name was known of Jareb and that he was defeated, a mighty wrath gat hold upon King Solomon, and the world was straitened upon him. And the blackness of the tempest was in his forehead, and the lightning flashed from his eyes, and his voice was as the thunder in the hills. And he drew his sword and smote off the head of Jareb as he stood.

Then said he to Zabud, 'Cast me this dog's carrion into the ditch without the city, that the fowls of uncleanness may feast themselves therewithal.'

But behold there was no dead body, neither any blood; and Zabud said, 'May God, to whom be glory, preserve my lord the King. Verily this man was a sorcerer.'

'Nay,' said King Solomon, 'he was no sorcerer, for always the jewel of my girdle warneth me so often as one who useth witchcraft cometh into my presence; yet as at this time it spake not. But said he not that he was bound unto the house of Jehoshaphat, our remembrancer? Haste thee thither and bring tidings whether thou hear of him.'

So Zabud went to the house of Jehoshaphat, and asked at the gate whether such an one had been there. And the master of the gate made answer and said, 'O my lord, of a truth such an one hath been here but even now, and he went in unto my lord, and even as he bowed his head to salute him my lord groaned thrice and gave up the ghost. And this stranger of whom thou speakest turned him about, saying, "The One Merciful hath had mercy upon him and given him peace." And behold he was gone.'

So Zabud returned to King Solomon, and told him all the tidings. And King Solomon rent his garments for the death of Jehoshaphat, and said, 'See now, this dog hath told me I know less than nought, yet knew he less than nought himself, otherwise would he never have thought to bear a message to a dead man. May God not have mercy on his soul.'

Now it was about a seven-years' space, and King Solomon again disguised his countenance and went forth with his chief vizier to seek one to play at the chess with the King. And as they walked along the covered way of the Thousand Fountains that leadeth to the House of Lebanon, at the corner of the street called Yellow there met them a damsel, as it were a moon, and her countenance was as a treasure house of the beauty of the elements. Her hair was golden as the flames in the circle of fire that is the uttermost girdle of the world; her eyebrows were as rainbows and her eyes as the stars of the air; her nose and cheeks were as flowers of the earth, white and red as roses in the rose gardens of Sharon, and the mole thereon of the colour of the soil of Eden; her lips were as the coral of the Seven Seas, and her teeth as pearls of the waters of El Kerker; her garments were as the Milky Way for the glitter of jewels, and as the nest of the Phoenix for sweet smell of musk and myrrh and ambergris and cassia and frankincense; and the swaying of her body as she walked was as the bending of the willow withes on the banks of Jordan when the wind of sundown reveals the inward whiteness of their leaves.

And King Solomon's eyes waxed swollen for gladness to look upon her, and he said, 'Peace be unto thee, O daughter of mine uncle.' And she answered, 'Peace be unto thee, O my lord, and the mercy of the One Merciful.'

And Solomon said, 'O damsel, who art thou and whither goest thou?' And she said, 'Thy servant is a slave girl of the household of Ahimaaz, to whom thy lord and mine, King Solomon, on whom be peace, hath given his daughter Basmath in marriage; and even now am I bound to the house of Ben Abinadab, to whom our lord King Solomon hath given his daughter Taphath in marriage, for there is a feast there toward this night, and thy slave hath been sent for to sing before the princes and captains and companies. And men call me Admatha the daughter of Adaiah.'

And the King said, 'What songs canst thou sing?' And she said, 'O my lord, thy slave girl hath but little skill, and her voice to the many soundeth harsh and untuneable; yet the lover,

when he swooneth in the extremity of his passion, is fain to hearken unto me, and my song is blessed of the wise man to whom the vanity of all things hath been revealed.'

And Solomon said, 'O Admatha, it is not yet the hour of the feast; come with us awhile to our lodging that we have prepared, and let us pass the time with wine and music until it behoveth thee to depart.' And she answered, 'Peace be upon ye; I will well.' So they came into the lodging, and Zabud let call for wine and they made merry.

Then King Solomon said, 'Let bring tables, that thou and I may play a bout at the chess, and then shalt thou sing us a song of them that give ease to the lover in the torment of his passion.'

But Admatha said, 'O my lord, as for playing at the chess at this time, I pray thee hold thy slave excused.'

'Wherefore so?' said King Solomon; 'for my heart is set to play with thee at the chess.' Then said Admatha, 'O my lord, the One Merciful, to whom be all glory, hath laid a burden on thy slave in this matter, forasmuch as she may in no wise lose a game at the chess, strive she never so sore; and if she play with thee and win the game, thou wilt haply be an-angered with her, and she should seem ungrateful to thee for this grace that thou hast shown her.'

And Solomon said within himself, 'I have held converse with this damsel aforetime, for of a surety I do remember this word she hath spoken that none may have the upper hand of her at the chess.' And he looked upon her straitly of a long time, yet could he call nothing to mind as of her face or favour. And he said within himself, 'Behold, that which is is that which hath been, and that which shall be, shall be even as that which is. Belike it was one of them I have defeated of old who boasted himself thus or ever I turned his boasting into shame.'

But he spake with his lips and said, 'O Admatha, even to lose a game at thy hands were sweeter than to overcome the King of Damascus, and, behold, I give thee this cloak in earnest of thy victory.'

Then Zabud let call for tables, and Solomon the King played at the chess with Admatha the slave girl; and Solomon's men were of the white and Admatha's men of the black. And Admatha played without thought, as one that could but little of the chess, so that in a brief space King Solomon had taken prisoner both her elephants and a knight of the right hand and a camel of the left, besides four of her foot soldiers, while Admatha had taken but one

foot soldier of King Solomon. And Solomon said within himself, 'What glory is it unto me to win at the chess of this music girl? Shall I lift a scymetar of the steel of Cathay to crop a flower of the balsam? I will contrive a combination and make an end of her.' So he made a combination and took her captain.

Then Admatha rose up and made as though she would go. But Solomon said, 'Whither away, O Admatha? for the game is not yet played out.'

Then Admatha turned about and said, 'O my lord King Solomon, when it listeth thee to sit on thy carpet, the winds become thy chariot, and all the beasts of the field fare under thee to subdue thine enemies; and the fowls of the air fly overhead as it were a canopy to shield thee from the sun; yet these chess men, that are but of ebony wood and the tusk of behemoth, refuse to obey thee. See now and behold: if thy slave should move yonder foot soldier on to the next square, where would my lord the King be then? As for playing at the chess, thy slave girl knoweth nought, yet knoweth she more withal than my lord King Solomon.'

And when Solomon looked at the tables, behold if his adversary should move the foot soldier on to the next square the King was checkmated without redress.

And when he understood that he was known of Admatha and that he was defeated, a mighty wrath gat hold upon King Solomon, and the world was straitened upon him; the vein of fury stood out between his eyebrows, and the fire flashed from his eyes as the blaze leaps from a burning mountain, and the darkness which gathered on his brow was as the smoke thereof, and his words rolled forth even as the molten stone from the mouths of the cauldrons of Eblis in the hills of Sikkil. And he drew his sword and smote off the head of Admatha as she stood.

And he cried aloud to Zabud, 'Cast me this swine's carcass into the ditch without the city, that the fowls of uncleanness may feast themselves therewithal.'

But, behold, there was no dead body, neither was there any blood; and Zabud said, 'God preserve my lord the King! this damsel was a sorceress.'

'Nay,' said King Solomon, 'for my ring spake no word of warning. But said she not that she was bound to the feast at the house of Ben Abinadab? Now, therefore, go straightway thither and bring me tidings.'

And as Zabud went toward the house he met a great company

of men and women weeping and wailing and rending their garments; and when they saw Zabud they cried, 'O my lord, mayst thou survive my lord Ben Abinadab! for, behold, as we all were feasting and making merry, a certain slave girl came into the company, whom my lord bade sing to her lute. And when she had tuned her lute she began to sing, and or ever she had sung two words my lord turned his face to the wall and died. Now, therefore, bear the tidings to King Solomon with haste, for our lady Taphath, the chiefest widow of Ben Abinadab, is the daughter of my lord the King.'

Then Solomon was sore troubled, and rent his garments and cast ashes upon his head, and the days were darkened upon him. And he said, 'Who is this slave girl? for of a surety I do remember all these things of aforetime.' Howbeit he remembered not Jareb ben Othniel, and he said, 'I am as one that resteth on his oar when the image of his oar is bent awry by reason of the water that is over it, so that he seeth not aright that which he seemeth to see. O! the waters! the waters! They have covered the whole world, so that no man seeth truly the things that have been for the waters that are above them.'

And about a space of one-and-twenty years, yet once more King Solomon and his chief vizier disguised themselves and went forth into the city, if haply they might find one to play at the chess with the King. And as they came nigh unto the Water Gate of the Temple, behold there stood at the bottom of the steps an old man, as it were a sheikh of the Sons of the Desert, and his hair was white as the watercourses of the hills in winter, and his beard flowed down to his knees, as it were icicles of stone in the caverns of Hermon, and his eyebrows were as the snow on the branches of the cedars of the forest, and his eyes as the torches of them that seek for Thammuz on Lebanon.

And Solomon said unto him, 'Peace be unto thee, O mine uncle.' And the old man answered, 'Peace be unto thee and mercy from the One Merciful.' And Solomon said, 'By what name shall I speak unto my father's brother, and whitherward shall we bear him company?'

And the old man said, 'I am Habakkuk ben Methusael, the Chief of the Benou Methusael, children of the Great Desert, and I have come hither to Jerusalem that I may play a game at the chess with my lord King Solomon.'

And Solomon said, 'O Habakkuk, is there any of the Sons of the Desert who is the equal of my lord King Solomon?'

And Habakkuk said, 'Nay, my son, there is none among the kings of the earth who may be compared to my lord King Solomon in riches, or in majesty, or in wisdom; yet haply in this matter of playing at the chess, the Lord, to whom be all glory, hath been minded not to lay up the whole of His treasure in a single treasure house; for thy servant hath played with men of understanding as well as with others these two hundred years and more, yet hath he never lost a game to any of the children of men.'

And Solomon said within himself, 'Now will I win a game of this patriarch of the Desert, and afterwards we will bring him to my palace, and when he seeth that it was none other than King Solomon himself who hath defeated him his shame shall be the less.'

So he spake to the old man and said, 'Behold, as at this time my lord King Solomon hath gone to sup with the daughter of Pharaoh in the House of Lebanon, and of a surety he will not return till after midnight, for thy servants but even now met the bearers returning with his litter. Wherefore do thou come with us to our lodging, and if it irk thee not win a game at the chess of thy servant.'

And Habakkuk said, 'I will well.'

So they came into the lodging, and Zabud let call for wine and they made merry; howbeit Habakkuk excused himself as for drinking of the wine for that he was of kindred with Hammath of the tribe of Rechab.

And Zabud let call for tables, and Solomon the King played at the chess with Habakkuk the Son of the Desert, and Solomon's men were of the white and Habakkuk's of the black. And Habakkuk played without thought as one that could but little of the chess, so that in a brief space King Solomon had taken prisoner both his elephants and a knight of the right hand and a camel of the left, besides four of his foot soldiers, while Habakkuk had taken but one foot soldier of King Solomon. And Solomon said within himself, 'What glory is it to win at the chess of a dog of the desert such as this? Doth the lightning make boast of slaying the frog that croaketh in the marsh? I will contrive a combination and make an end of him.' So he made a combination and took his captain.

Then Habakkuk laid hold on one of his ebony foot soldiers, and said, 'O my lord King Solomon, the One Merciful hath given thee dominion over all ghouls and afrits and jinn and marids of the jinn, them that inhabit the houses of the fire and them that

walk on the earth or creep within its bowels, them that dwell within the deep waters and them that fly upon the wings of the air; yea, all them that durst disobey thy behests hast thou imprisoned against the Day of Judgment in vessels of copper, sealed in lead with thine own seal, and hast cast them into the sea of El Kerker. Yet hath not the One Merciful, to whom be glory, given thee lordship over these bits of ebony and ivory that they should do thy will; for lo, when I shall set down this foot soldier on yonder next square, where will my lord the King be then?’

And Solomon looked at the tables, and behold when his adversary should set down the foot soldier he was checkmated without redress. And when he understood that he was known of the Son of the Desert and had been defeated by him, a mighty wrath gat hold upon King Solomon and the world was straitened upon him; and his forehead waxed dark as the Night of Retribution, and his eyes flashed thereunder as it were the burning of the two Cities of the Plain, and his voice was as the roaring of the fire wherewith they were consumed. And he leapt to his feet and would have drawn his sword to smite off the head of Habakkuk. But Habakkuk abode still and lifted up the ebony foot soldier in his right hand, and the King was as one stricken with a sudden palsy; and there came upon him a great whiteness and trembling, and his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth, and the sword dropped from his right hand.

And Habakkuk said unto him, ‘O my lord King Solomon, where is the wisdom wherewith the One Merciful hath gifted thee beyond all others of the sons of men? Behold now these three times hast thou gone about to slay the servant of the living God. How is it that thou hast not known me?’

And as Solomon looked straitly at Habakkuk the snow of his hair and his beard was melted away, and the manner of his garments was changed; and even while Solomon was yet marvelling at the change, behold it was the slave girl Admatha who held up the ebony foot soldier against the King.

And the waters of forgetfulness were rolled back from the King’s memory, and he said, ‘Verily I should have remembered and repented, for lo this game is the very game, move for move, and combination for combination, that I played with thee, O Admatha, what time thou wert sent for to sing in the house of Ben Abinadab my son.’

And Admatha said, ‘O my lord King Solomon, of a truth this

is even so, but where is the wisdom wherewith the One Merciful hath gifted thee beyond all others of the children of men? How is it thou hast not known me?’

And as Solomon looked straitly at Admatha her countenance and the manner of her garments were changed, and even while the King was yet marvelling at the change, behold it was Jareb ben Othniel who held up the ebony foot soldier against the King.

And the things which had been were lifted above the waters of forgetfulness and Solomon saw them even as they were. And he said, ‘Verily I should have remembered and repented, for lo these two games are the very same, move for move, and combination for combination, with the game I played aforetime with thee, O Jareb ben Othniel, when thou didst bear a message to Jehoshaphat my remembrancer.’

And Jareb said, ‘O my lord King Solomon, of a truth this is even so, but where is the wisdom wherewith the One Merciful hath gifted thee above all thy fellows? How is it that thou hast not known me?’

And as Solomon looked straitly at Jareb his countenance and the manner of his garments were changed, and even while the King was yet marvelling at the change a glory as of the unspoken Name lighted his face, and his hair was as the rays of the sun at noonday; and his raiment was as a flame of fire, and from his shoulders came forth wings, whereof every feather was as a rainbow after the storm.

And the Angel said, ‘O King Solomon, where is the wisdom wherewith the One Merciful hath gifted thee above thy brethren? Even yet hast thou not known me?’ And the Angel still held up the ebony foot soldier against the King.

And Solomon said, ‘Verily long since should I have known thee and repented, O Azrael, angel of death, for none save the brother of the Four who uphold the throne of God, to whom be glory, could have played this game at the chess that thou hast played against me, lo these three times.’

And Azrael said, ‘O King Solomon, may the One Merciful have much mercy upon thee, for thou needest much!’

And he set down the ebony foot soldier, and King Solomon was dead.

SEBASTIAN EVANS.

## *A Lost Tragedian.*

‘Full fathom five’ Gustavus ‘lies!’

NO history of the English-speaking theatres of the nineteenth century, whether in Great Britain, America, or Australia, will be complete without some record of the meteoric career of the ill-fated Gustavus Vaughan Brooke.

Born in Dublin about half a century ago, and educated at Trinity College, he became stage-struck while yet a boy. Obtaining an introduction to the manager of the Theatre Royal, he persuaded that autocratic personage to permit him to attempt *William Tell*, and other parts which he had seen Macready act. It is needless to say that the poor tyro failed signally; he, however, gave sufficient indications of promise to encourage him to hope that he might ultimately become an actor. Soon afterwards we hear of his opening and ‘shutting’ at the Victoria, as *Virginus*. Subsequently he went into the country, got an engagement upon a modest salary in the Great Northern Circuit, which opened the doors of all the great theatres to him. He soon emerged from the crowd, and, while still a youth, was received as a sort of semi-star in Manchester, Liverpool, and other large towns.

When I first met him in Manchester, there were three theatres there—the newly erected Theatre Royal, at that time considerably in advance of any theatre of its size in or out of London; the old Queen’s Theatre (where I was acting); and a wooden edifice, which had been converted from a circus into what was called the City Theatre.

Probably all the actors, and all the amateurs calling themselves actors, now engaged in the various Metropolitan theatres put together could not form three companies so efficient as the three companies at that time acting in Manchester. The best one by many degrees was that which appeared at the wooden theatre. The principal members of this troupe were Gustavus Vaughan Brooke, ‘Lord Foppington,’ Browne (the greatest and most versatile comedian I have ever seen in my life), William Davidge, Henry Bedford, and Sam Emery.

A fortnight or three weeks after this occurrence, in going

home one night, I met Mr. James Browne and Mr. Barry Sullivan (then leading actor at the Theatre Royal), and adjourned with them to the tavern immediately opposite the City Theatre. Our principal topic of conversation was the arrest of Brooke as he was going on the stage that night. It was his benefit, and the manager had been obliged to get him out of durance to enable him to keep faith with the public. While we were discussing the incident, a row was heard outside, and a handsome young fellow entered the room in animated altercation with a cabman about his fare. The stranger, who spoke with a delicious Dublin brogue, was fair-complexioned, with an oval face, fair hair, and blue eyes. He stood about five feet ten or higher, was broad-chested, straight as a dart, and apparently was about five-and-twenty or thirty years of age. His dress was peculiar to eccentricity. He wore a drab cloth overcoat with a cape, a large blue silk muffler was twisted carelessly round his neck, and a white hat was perched on one side of his head. Although I had never seen him in my life, I felt instinctively this must be Brooke. I was not left long in doubt upon the subject, for when he came to our end of the room Sullivan introduced us to each other, and a delightful time we had of it till we broke up about two in the morning. Brooke and I had many common points of interest—notably one. Three years before, he had been in management at Kilmarnock, and the pecuniary outlook was so dubious that being unable to pay his lodgings he had been turned out, and was compelled to take up his quarters in the dressing-room at the tumble-down old theatre, which was over a stable. Two years afterwards I passed through the same ordeal in the same locality, and we laughed heartily enough as we compared notes.

After this I read with interest in the newspapers of his *début* as Othello at the Olympic—then under the management of Captain Spicer. There was a very bad house: the audience were unsympathetic, not to say antagonistic, and the new actor made no headway at all until he reached the second act. My friend Walter Lacy informed me that up to this period Brooke took no pains to conceal his contempt for the cold-blooded audience. A happy accident, however, broke the ice.

The newspapers of the day teemed with accounts of the gallantry of the Emir of Algeria, Abd'l Kader; more particularly of an exploit in which he had rescued a number of women and children from being roasted alive, by riding through his blazing

camp, sabre in hand, cutting the tent-ropes, and carrying away the poor creatures clinging to his saddle-bow.

In the quarrel scene, as Othello came rushing down between the combatants, exclaiming, 'Hold! for your lives!' as his scymetar swept through the air it collided with their swords, making a fiery circle in its flight. The picturesque grandeur of the action and the magnificence of the pose so struck a fellow in the gallery that he roared out, 'Abd'l Kader, by G—!' This exclamation touched the keynote of sympathy: the house rose at it, the pit sprang to its feet, the boxes swelled the general chorus of applause, and from that moment the success of the actor was assured.

When he made his exit, half the house got up and made their exit also, leaving Iago and Cassio to finish their scene by themselves; while they (the auditors) discussed the new tragedian in excited tones at every bar within a hundred yards of the theatre. From the commencement of the third act till the curtain fell upon Othello's death the play went like a whirlwind. Next morning the actor 'awoke and found himself famous,' and henceforth the little theatre in Wych Street was crowded nightly.

Captain Spicer behaved most liberally: Brooke's original salary was 10*l.* a week; but after the very first performance it was increased to 60*l.* Nor was this all: the management of Drury Lane and the Haymarket contended for him, and offered fabulous terms; he, however, remained faithful to the flag under which he sailed.

He was now the talk of the town, and ran through a succession of his great parts with continued and increasing success. His admirers alleged that he was the greatest Othello since Kean, that he was also the beau-ideal of 'Romeo, Claude Melnotte, and Ion. I confess that to me it is difficult to realise the idea of superlative excellence in such opposing individualities as Ion and Othello. As far as I know, the only original part he ever created was Philip Augustus, in Dr. Marston's noble play of 'Philip of France and Marie de Meranie,' in which Miss Helen Faucit also created the character of the heroine.

At the period of our intimacy his acting was, to my thinking, more distinguished by vigour than subtlety or refinement; out there was a noble ardour and a majesty of motion about him which carried everything triumphantly before them, and which I have rarely seen equalled since. In the artifices of the histrionic art he was pre-eminent; he 'took the stage' like a lion—indeed, his every movement was rhythmical, and was dis-

tinguished by a leonine grace conspicuously absent in the angular attitudes of certain weak-kneed and wooden-jointed actors of later days.

In *Othello* he certainly eclipsed all living actors save Edwin Forest, who towered head and shoulders above them all, not even excepting the much-beslaved Salvini; in *Virginius*, after Macready's retirement, he remained unrivalled.

A great future was now before him; the ball was at his foot, the game was his own; but, alas! for lack of common prudence, his fall was as rapid as his rise had been phenomenal.

From the beginning to the end of his chequered and romantic career he lacked ballast, and was always but too prone to be led astray by the latest sycophant, especially if the sycophant happened to wear a petticoat. Instead of 'shunning vain delights, and living laborious days,' his youth and high spirits led him headlong into the vortex of dissipation, which surrounded and soon dragged him down.

Sometimes he sought relief from these ignoble occupations in rowing and boating. One day he rowed up the river from Earl's Wharf Pier to Putney and back; a jovial dinner and skittles and other diversions followed; then it became necessary to 'put on a spurt' to get back in time for the performance. It was his first appearance in town as Sir Giles Overreach; there had been no Sir Giles in London since Kean's day, and it was characteristic of the man that Brooke treated so fiery an ordeal so lightly. When he arrived at the theatre it was long past the time of commencement; the audience (a densely crowded one) were already impatient; it was three-quarters of an hour late when the curtain rose, but the delay was condoned, and he was received with unusual enthusiasm. He wore a new dress that night; the heat was overpowering, and he was in a bath of perspiration, arising principally from the hasty pull down the river. At the end of the first act he desired his dresser to strip off his singlet; the new canvas lining of the dress was damp; a chill struck to his lungs; by the time he reached his great scene in the fifth act he was totally inaudible, and his failure was as complete in Sir Giles as his triumph had been assured in *Othello*.

Instead of resting and nursing himself, he tried to fight off his malady with drink; but he got worse and worse, collapsed utterly, and left the theatre.

The manager of Drury Lane still believed in him, sought him out, offered splendid terms; he pulled himself together, and, fortified by the accursed whisky bottle, attempted to retrieve his

fallen fortunes. There was an enormous house ; great things were anticipated ; but, alas ! of the brilliant and accomplished tragedian, there remained only what George Lewes described to be 'a hoarse and furious man, tearing a passion to tatters with the melody of a raven.' Yes ! the magnificent voice, which had once struck the chords of every passion, that had thrilled every heart, had gone for ever. Even in its decline it still remained a marvellous organ, so long as he knew how to use it. This engagement culminated in a miserable *fiasco*, in consequence of which he quitted the theatre in disgrace, and sought refuge in an obscure tavern in the immediate vicinity.

Contemporaneous with these events, Mr. Phineas T. Barnum, had despatched one Mr. Wilton Hall to Europe, to secure Jenny Lind for a tour in America. Having accomplished this mission to the satisfaction of his chief, Mr. Hall was once more despatched to England to hunt up novelties to exploit in the States.

Upon arriving in town this gentleman heard, of course (for the subject was rife on all men's tongues), of Brooke's sudden rise and equally sudden fall ; and it occurred to the astute American that Gustavus was still a young man, that amendment was not impossible, and that what he had done before he might do again. Presenting himself at the H—— late in the day, he found the wretched object of his quest still in bed, and roaring out for a 'pot of four half!' Upon explaining his business, he met with but scant welcome, for the unfortunate tragedian's mind was unhinged by his reverses, and he had arrived at the conclusion that his career was over. Hall, however, would not take 'no' for an answer. Instead of a 'pot of four half,' he called for a bottle of Cliquot ; under its benignant influence he soothed the fallen star, and in an hour's time it was arranged for him to leave the place on the morrow. Next day at twelve o'clock, Hall came with a brougham, paid the tavern bill, and took Brooke to splendid lodgings in Belgravia. The day after, he was taken to a West End tailor and 'figged out' in the height of the mode ; and a few days later, to the astonishment of everybody, Gustavus was to be seen every afternoon lolling about in his chariot among the fashionable mob in the Ladies' Mile.

After a month's recuperation, the tragedian and his mentor sailed for New York, where a series of engagements in all the principal theatres was speedily arranged. The tour commenced far away down South ; the climate agreed with Brooke, who recovered his voice—that is, as much as he ever did recover it ; he

'struck ile' immediately, and once more leaped into fame and fortune—the first tour alone yielding a profit of 20,000*l*.

He had left England a beggar; after two or three years' absence he returned a wealthy man: he had been expelled from Drury Lane with ignominy, he returned in glory; he had been hooted from the stage, he was now received with the loud triumph of a conqueror: he was engaged for twenty-four performances; he gave forty-eight, to houses crowded from floor to dome.

His progress through the provinces was one triumphal march: he entered every town in a magnificent coach drawn by four horses and driven by two outriders in scarlet; crowds followed him with cheers from the hotel to the theatre, from the theatre home again (sometimes making asses of themselves by taking the horses from his carriage and taking their place); the newspapers exhausted the language of adulation, and editors and reporters bowed down before him as if he had been a demi-god! Deputations of mayors and aldermen besought him to honour their towns by giving an additional performance; dinners and suppers were given to him, or he gave them; presentations of plate were made to 'the greatest tragedian in the world'—which, however, 'the greatest tragedian in the world' had to pay for—besides which he presented tickets for soup, coals, blankets, and tickets for the play to the deserving poor and their children, who in Ireland were taught to pray for 'father and mother and Gustavus Brooke!'

While in Birmingham, the Hon. George Coppin, the famous Australian comedian, manager, and M.P., saw Brooke act, and engaged him then and there for two years in Australia and New Zealand at 100*l*. a night, paying all expenses besides. This engagement also was a triumphal success, and at the end of two years Gustavus was rolling in wealth. By the same time he had, unfortunately for himself, quarrelled with Hall, and they parted company—the worst day's work Brooke ever did in his life.

At this period he might have retired with forty or fifty thousand pounds, but in an evil moment he was induced to enter into partnership with Coppin in the management of the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, and of a great public pleasure-garden called the Melbourne Cremorne. The moment he went into management his luck began to turn; he had no knowledge whatever of finance, and failure followed failure. Things got from bad to worse; he returned to his old pernicious habits; at last, having lost every shilling he had in the world, over head and ears in debt and in danger of arrest, he was compelled to fly the country! When he

arrived in the colony, he was received as if he had been a member of the Royal family; deputations came aboard to meet him; when he landed there were crowds, carriages and horses, bands of music, and triumphal arches, to accentuate his welcome; when he left, he slunk aboard at dead of night, like a thief, and lay hidden behind the smoke-stack of the *London* till she quitted the harbour; when he left England he was a man of fortune; when he returned after an absence of seven years, he was penniless!

To mend matters, he had taken to himself a young wife (Miss Avonia Jones), of whose ability he entertained a much higher estimate than the public ever did.

During his absence taste had undergone a strange transmutation in the old country, and Charles Fechter was the fashionable idol of the hour; the criticasters had declared that he was the apostle of the future, that he had taught us how Shakespeare should be acted (with a French accent), that all English art was commonplace, old-fashioned, vulgar, and, indeed, defunct. These sapient gentlemen could not now stultify themselves: Fechter had failed miserably in *Othello*—*ergo*, Brooke must not succeed. Upon his re-appearance as 'the valiant Moor' upon the scene of his former triumphs, he was assailed with a general chorus of vituperation that was amazing; according to the consensus of critical opinion he was now vulgar, coarse, extravagant, scarce fit for a booth at a country fair. Indeed, a distinguished man of letters absolutely had the good taste to declare to me that the initials 'G. V. B.' ought to be interpreted 'Great Vulgar Brute!' Others went further, and alleged that he was drunk upon his opening night! As a matter of fact, he had never been more sober in his life. For two months prior to the commencement of his engagement at the 'Lane' he had lived quietly in the bosom of his family at Dublin, went early to bed and early to rise, and was in better form on the night of his re-appearance in London than when he first won all hearts as *Othello*. On this occasion the public unfortunately were 'as easily led by the nose as asses are,' and they accepted the *ipse dixit* of the papers as gospel. Poor 'Gus' was further dragged down by the failure of his wife, a young, crude, inexperienced actress, and his collapse was disastrous and complete. When he went into the country, the bad news had preceded him, and he failed nearly everywhere. At or about this period we met a great deal, and he acted at my theatres in Leeds, York, and Hull, with varying success.

At length family matters took his wife to America, and he was left to his own resources in this country, with deplorable results.

When we next came in contact with each other, by a remarkable coincidence we were both again acting in Manchester. This time the venue was changed; he was at the Queen's, I was at the Theatre Royal. One day he called upon me, and told me he was going to Leeds, where at that time I was building my new theatre, subsequently destroyed by fire. He asked me to act for his benefit at the minor theatre; of course I gladly acquiesced, and it was arranged that I was to play Othello to his Iago.

What I am now about to narrate could not possibly be published at the time of its occurrence, but it may not be amiss after all these years to chronicle a sad but remarkable event.

Upon arriving in Leeds to rehearse, I saw no sign of him till the fifth act of the play, when he informed me that he had only that moment received the startling news that his wife and George Coppin would arrive in Liverpool the next day; the one was returning from America, the other was coming from Australia for the express purpose of re-engaging Brooke and rehabilitating him in the colony.

As usual, when left to himself, poor 'Gus' had committed numerous indiscretions. Amongst others, he had involved himself in an unfortunate connection, and was quite unmanned in contemplating the situation in which his folly had placed him.

When I got to the theatre at an early hour that night, to my astonishment I found him (for we occupied the same room) already dressed for Iago. Except that he seemed a little more dignified than usual, there was nothing remarkable about him; it was only when we got on the stage together that I found he was *Bacchi plenus*! My impression is that had he been acting Othello no one would have discovered his infirmity; indeed, it was impossible for him to go wrong in the Moor, but he had never mastered the words of Iago textually, and was always afraid of being caught tripping with the text. The continued effort of memory muddled him, and unfortunately let the audience into the secret. He stuttered and stammered, and even mixed up his soliloquies in the most *mal à propos* manner. Instead of saying at the end of the first act—

'I have 't; it is engendered; hell and night  
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light!'

he substituted the conclusion of the soliloquy in the next act:—

‘Tis here, but yet confused—

Knavery’s plain face is never seen till used !’

whereupon some over-zealous Shakespearian in the pit blandly exclaimed, ‘No, it is you who are confused, Mr. Brooke.’ This interruption disconcerted Gustavus and put him entirely wrong.

In the quarrel scene of the second act he broke down altogether. The most notable feature of his picturesque costume was a breastplate of white buckskin, elaborately prepared with pipe-clay, after the fashion in which soldiers’ belts are got up. When the interruption occurred which led to the collapse, Brooke advanced amid a tempest of yells and groans, and evidently getting a little mixed in his metaphors, and under the impression that he was acting for my benefit instead of my acting for his, exclaimed, “You common cry of curs, whose breath I hate,” I don’t care the cracking of a rotten gooseberry for you ; I am here to-night to do honour to the legitimate drama in the person of my friend, John Coleman, and I can lay my hand upon my heart and say——’ and as he suited the action to the word there arose a pillar of pipe-clay which filled the stage, and evoked, I think, the loudest roar of laughter I ever heard in a theatre.

After this I persuaded him to drive home, under charge of my man, while the stock leading man finished the part of Iago ; then putting on steam, I rushed through the last three acts to the best of my ability.

I had arranged for Gustavus to be brought back just as the curtain fell. During the interval he had tubbed and soda-watered ; and ‘Richard was himself again.’ He was in mourning for the death of his mother, and was clad from head to foot in black, black-gloved, &c. I thought I had never seen him look so *distingué*. Placing him hastily at the proscenium wing, on the left-hand side, I said, ‘Now, Gus, will you trust yourself entirely to me ?’

‘I will do anything you wish me to do, John,’ he replied.

‘Stand here then,’ said I, ‘listen to what I am about to say, and, for God’s sake, don’t stir hand or foot till I bid you.’ Then, in response to the call, I went before the curtain, and addressed the audience thus:—

‘Your voices are very eloquent on my behalf, let me entreat you to use them a little on behalf of my friend. For the past week I have looked forward to this night with pleasure, but the pleasure of renewing my acquaintance with you was as nothing

compared to the honour I anticipated in acting this part beside Gustavus Brooke, whose Othello I considered, in my boyhood, one of the great achievements of the English stage. Well, to-night has been a great grief and a great disappointment to us all; but if you knew the cause I am sure you would condone all the shortcomings which have occurred. No one in this building is more conscious than my poor friend that he has failed in his duty to the poet, to you—and, above all, to himself; but you who are indebted to him for so many pleasures of memory, you who have so often seen him at his best and brightest, can well afford to be generous now. He is about to leave us for a distant country: in all human probability we shall never see his face nor hear his voice again; he hears every word I am saying, he is anxious to be reconciled to you; you cannot, will not, must not, part from him in anger—I ask you, for the sake of old times, to give him one parting cheer, one parting God-speed!’

As I spoke the last words I stepped to the wing, and led him to the centre of the stage. Then occurred a scene which I shall never forget as long as I live; the house rose like one man, and cheered with a mighty voice that shook the building to its base. Men and women waved their hats and handkerchiefs, and sobbed and cried aloud. He was himself carried away by the general emotion; clasping my hand fervently, he made an attempt to speak, but I plucked his arm under mine, and we retired together amidst the continued acclamations. As we passed out of sight of the audience, he fell weeping on my shoulder; then he gasped out, ‘God bless you, old fellow!’ We had five minutes’ serious talk before we said good-bye, and when we parted that night we parted for ever.

As I was about to undress, the manager came to my room in a state of great perturbation, and told me that the editor of the only local paper which at that time devoted its attention to the drama had gone away disgusted at the period of the breakdown in the second act, and that the sub-editor had confidentially informed him (the manager) that a ‘slating’ article was in type for publication on the morrow.

Now, this one part of Othello is the bow of Ulysses; it is the only part that ever ‘takes the backbone out’ of me for the next day; besides which, it had been a night of horrors, involving superhuman exertions on my part to keep the audience in hand and carry the play to a successful conclusion. In addition to all this, I had to be in the express to London at two o’clock in the

morning; it was now twelve. The publication of this article at the period would have been a pleasant welcome for the poor wife on her arrival in the Mersey, and would certainly have put an end to Brooke's engagement with Coppin. The paper would go to press in an hour; there was nothing for it but action, prompt and decided; so as soon as I had got the beastly black stuff off my face, I drove down to the office of the 'E——.' The editor, who was a personal friend, had gone home. He lived a mile and a half out of town; I drove without a moment's delay to Mount Valery. He had gone to bed; I knocked him up, explaining my business. At first he was surly as a bear with a sore head at being awakened from his first sleep, hard as nails, and obdurate as the devil; but he yielded at length to my entreaties, and gave me a note authorising the sub-editor to expunge the article. Previous to its suppression they gave me a 'pull' of it, and it is somewhere in one of my scrap-books now. Assuredly I slept none the less soundly on my way to town for my share in that part of the night's performance.

And yet, if the article had appeared, perhaps Coppin might not have engaged Brooke for Australia; in that case he might not have sailed in the *London*. And yet, those who love him best must feel now 'Tis better as it is.'

I never heard from him again except once. I wrote him for my prompt-book of *Othello*, which I had left behind on that eventful night. He replied, taking an affectionate farewell, but asking if he might keep the book for my sake.

Coppin engaged him for Australia, and went on in advance to sound the note of preparation. The people of Melbourne were agog with anticipation, eager to forget and forgive, and anxious for their old favourite to renew his former triumphs.

At the moment of our parting Brooke solemnly promised to turn over a new leaf, and I have every reason to believe that he did so. It is certain that for months prior to his leaving England he had been both temperate and abstemious.

His sister, who through life had been his guardian angel, accompanied him to Australia. They sailed from Gravesend in the *London*, the very vessel which had brought him home. The story of that fatal voyage has been told quite often enough, and told better than I can ever hope to tell it. Strange to say, however, I encountered in the very Manchester where we had first met, a sailor—one of the survivors of that ill-fated expedition—who told me that poor 'Gus' had endeared himself to everybody

on board by his modesty and manliness. His sister was lying below, sick and helpless. At the last moment, when the men who escaped took to the boats, they urged him to accompany them; but he put them gently aside and said, 'No, thanks; you are very good, lads; but I can't leave her.' As they were moving away he said, 'When you get to Melbourne, remember me to the boys.' For answer they gave a parting cheer. As they pulled off they saw him leaning over the rail, his bare feet paddling in the rising waters, a sad, sweet smile upon his face, his wistful eyes fixed upon them till the ship faded out of sight, and darkness fell upon the deep.

That picture of the poor player standing alone, as it were, amidst the quiet crowd calmly awaiting death with the dogged spirit of their island race is almost too awful to contemplate, even at this distance of time. Were they thinking of home, friends, or kindred? Was he recalling his lost youth, his wasted manhood, or was he dreaming of the young wife whom he had left behind, and who died so soon after of a broken heart? Did he see some phantom audience rising before him as the doomed ship sank beneath the wild waves that sounded his requiem; or had his simple faith in that supreme moment found shelter in the blessed hope that lifts the sinner's soul to Heaven? Let us hope so.

His epitaph is 'writ in water'; were it 'graven on granite,' had I the writing, it should run thus, in the lines of our great master:—

'Nothing in his life  
Became him like the leaving it; he died  
As one that had been studied in his death,  
To throw away the dearest thing he owed  
As 'twere a careless trifle.'

So best! Had he survived the terrors of that awful time, who knows what fate might have held in store for him. As it was,—

'Death cometh not to him untimely who is fit to die.'

Praise and blame are alike now; yet I venture to apply to him Lord Rosebery's noble *apologia* for Robert Burns:—'Too much has been made of errors which were the generous faults of a generous mind, and we do not love him the less for feeling that he was not altogether removed from our lower humanity.'

For myself,—because I loved him, I have paid this poor tribute to the memory of a man who never had an enemy in this world, except—himself!

JOHN COLEMAN.

## *Little Joe Gander.*

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'JOHN HERRING.'

**T**'HERE'S no good in him,' said his mother, 'not a mossul!' With these words she thrust little Joe forward by applying her knee to the small of his back, and thereby jerking him into the middle of the school before the master. 'There's no making nothing out of him, whack him as you will.'

Little Joe Lambole was a child of ten, dressed in second-hand, nay, third-hand garments that did not fit. His coat had been a scarlet soldier's uniform, that had gone when discarded to a dealer, who had dealt it to a carter, and when the carter had worn it out it was reduced and adapted to the wear of the child. The nether garments had, in like manner, served a full-grown man till worn out; then they had been cut down at the knees. Though shortened in leg they maintained their former copiousness of seat, and served as an inexhaustible receptacle of dust. Often as little Joe was 'licked' there issued from the dense mass of drapery clouds of dust. It was like beating a puff-ball.

'Only a seven-month child,' said Mrs. Lambole contemptuously, 'born without his nails on fingers and toes; they grewed later. His wits have never come right, and a deal, a deal of larruping it will take to make 'em grow. Use the rod; we won't grumble at you for doing so.'

Little Joe Lambole when he came into the world had not been expected to live. He was a poor, small, miserable baby, that could not roar, but whimpered. He had been privately baptised directly he was born, because, Mrs. Lambole said, 'the child is mine, though it be such a creetur, and I wouldn't like it, according, to be buried like a dog.'

He was called Joseph. The Scriptural Joseph had been sold as a bondman into Egypt; this little Joseph seemed to have been brought into the world to be a slave. In all propriety he ought to have died as a baby, and that happy consummation was almost desired, but he disappointed expectations and lived. His mother

and father loved him, doubtless; but love is manifested in many ways, and the Lamboles showed theirs in a rough way, by slaps and blows and kicks. The father was ashamed of him because he was a weakling, and the mother because he was ugly. He was a meagre little fellow with a long neck and a white face and sunken cheeks, a pigeon breast, and a big stomach. He walked with his head forward and his great pale blue eyes staring before him into the far distance, as if he were always looking out of the world. His walk was a waddle, and he tumbled over every obstacle, because he never looked where he was going, always looked to something beyond the horizon.

Because of his walk and his long neck, and staring eyes, and big stomach, the village children called him 'Gander Joe' or 'Joe Gander;' and his parents were not sorry, for they were ashamed that such a creature should be known as a Lambole.

The Lamboles were a sturdy, hearty people, with cheeks like quarantine apples, and bones set firm and knit with iron sinews. They were a hard-working, practical people, who fattened pigs and kept poultry at home. Lambole was a road-maker. In breaking stones one day a bit of one had struck his eye and blinded it. After that he wore a black patch upon it. He saw well enough out of the other; he never missed seeing his own interests. Lambole could have made a few pence with his son had his son been worth anything. He could have sent him to scrape the road, and bring the manure off it in a shovel to his garden. But Joe never took heartily to scraping the dung up. In a word, the boy was good for nothing.

He had hair like tow, and a little straw hat on his head with the top torn, so that the hair forced its way out, and as he walked the top bobbed about like the lid of a boiling saucepan.

When the whortleberries were ripe in June, Mrs. Lambole sent Joe out with other children to collect the berries in a tin can; she sold them for fourpence a quart, and any child could earn eightpence a day in whortleberry time; one that was active might earn a shilling.

But Joe would not remain with the other children. They teased him, imitated ganders and geese, and poked out their necks and uttered sounds in imitation of the voices of these birds. Moreover they stole the berries he had picked and put them in their own cans.

When Joe Gander left them and found himself alone in the woods, then he lay down among the brown heather and green

fern, and looked up through the oak leaves at the sky, and listened to the singing of the birds. Oh, wondrous music of the woods! the hum of the summer air among the leaves, the drone of the bees about the flowers, the twittering and fluting and piping of the finches and blackbirds and thrushes, and the cool soft cooing of the wood pigeons, like the lowing of feathered oxen; then the tapping of the green woodpecker and a glimpse of its crimson head, like a carbuncle running up the tree trunk, and the powdering down of old husks of fir cones or of the tender rind of the topmost shoot of a Scottish pine; for aloft a red squirrel was barking a beautiful tree out of wantonness and frolic. A rabbit would come forth from the bracken and sit up in the sun, and clean its face with its fore paws and stroke its long ears; then, seeing the soiled red coat, would skip up—little Joe lying very still—and screw its nose and turn its eyes from side to side, and skip nearer again, till it was quite close to Joe Gander; and then the boy laughed and the rabbit was gone with a flash of white tail.

Happy days! days of listening to mysterious music, of looking into mysteries of sun and foliage, of spiritual intercourse with the great mother soul of nature.

In the evenings, when Gander Joe came without his can, or with his can empty, he would say to his mother, 'Oh, mammy! it was so nice; everything was singing.'

'I'll make you sing in the chorus too!' cried Mrs. Lambole, and laid a stick across his shoulders. Experience had taught her the futility of dusting at a lower level.

Then Gander Joe cried and writhed, and promised to be more diligent in picking whortleberries in future. But when he went again into the wood it was again the same. The spell of the wood spirits was on him; he forgot about the berries at fourpence a quart, and lay on his back and listened. And the whole wood whispered and sang to him and consoled him for his beating, and the wind played lullabies among the fir spines and whistled in the grass, and the aspen clashed its myriad of tiny cymbals together, producing an orchestra of sound that filled the soul of the dreaming boy with love and delight and unutterable yearning.

It fared no better in autumn, when the blackberry season set in. Joe went with his can to an old quarry where the brambles sent their runners over the masses of rubble thrown out from the pits, and warmed and ripened their fruit on the hot stones. It was a marvel to see how the blackberries grew in this deserted quarry; how large their fruit swelled, how thick they were—like mul-

berries. On the road side of the quarry was a belt of pines, and the sun drew out of their bark scents of unsurpassed sweetness. About the blackberries hovered spotted white and yellow and black moths, beautiful as butterflies. Butterflies did not fail either. The red admiral was there, resting on the bark of the trees, asleep in the sun with wings expanded, or drifting about the clumps of yellow ragwort, doubtful whether to perch or not.

Here, hidden behind the trees, among the leaves of overgrown rubble, was a one-story cottage of wood and clay, covered with thatch, in which lived Roger Gale, the postman.

Roger Gale had ten miles to walk every morning, delivering letters, and the same number of miles every evening, for which twenty miles he received the liberal pay of six shillings a week. He had to be at the post office at half-past six in the morning to receive the letters, and at seven in the evening to deliver them. His work took him about six hours. The middle of the day he had to himself. Roger Gale was an old soldier and enjoyed a pension. He occupied himself, when at home, as a shoemaker; but the walks took so much out of him, being an old man, that he had not the strength and energy to do much cobbling when at home. Therefore he idled a good deal, and he amused his idle hours with a violin. Now when Joe Gander came to the quarry before the return of the postman from his rounds, he picked blackberries; but no sooner had Roger Gale unlocked his door, taken down his fiddle, and drawn the bow across the strings, than Joe set down the can and listened. And when old Roger began to play an air from the 'Daughter of the Regiment,' then Joe crept towards his cottage in little stages of wonderment and hunger to hear more and hear better, much in the same way as now and again in the wood the inquisitive rabbits had approached his red jacket. Presently Joe was seated on the doorstep, with his ear against the wooden door, and the blackberries and the can, and mother's orders, and father's stick, and his hard bed, and his meagre meals, even the whole world had passed away as a scroll that is rolled up and laid aside, and he lived only in the world of music.

Though his great eyes were wide he saw nothing through them; though the rain began to fall, and the north-east wind to blow, he felt nothing: he had but one faculty that was awake, and that was hearing.

One day Roger came to his door and opened it suddenly, so that the child, leaning against it, fell across his threshold.

‘Whom have we here? What is this? What do you want?’ asked the postman.

Then Gander Joe stood up, craning his long neck and staring out of his goggle eyes, with his rough flaxen hair standing up in a ruffle above his head and his great stomach protruded, and said nothing. So Roger burst out laughing. But he did not kick him off the step; he gave him a bit of bread and a drop of cider, and presently drew from the boy the confession that he had been listening to the fiddle. This was flattering to the postman, and it was the initiation of a friendship between them.

But when Joe came home with an empty can and said, ‘Oh, mammy, Master Roger Gale did fiddle so beautiful!’ the woman said, ‘Fiddle! I’ll fiddle your back pretty smartly, you idle vagabond;’ and she was a truthful woman who never fell short of her word.

To break him of his bad habits—that is, of his dreaminess and uselessness—Mrs. Limbole took Joe to school.

At school he had a bad time of it. He could not learn the letters. He was mentally incapable of doing a subtraction sum. He sat on his bench staring at the teacher, and was unable to answer an ordinary question what the lesson was about. The school children tormented him, the monitor scolded, and the master beat. Then little Joe Gander took to absenting himself from school. He was sent off every morning by his mother, but instead of going to the school he went to the cottage in the quarry, and listened to the fiddle of Roger Gale.

Little Joe got hold of an old box, and with a knife he cut holes in it, and he fashioned a bridge, and then a handle, and he strung horsehair over the latter, and made a bow, and drew very faint sounds from this improvised violin, that made the postman laugh, but which gave great pleasure to Joe. The sound that issued from his instrument was like the humming of flies, but he got distinct notes out of his strings, though the notes were faint.

After he had played truant for some time his father heard what he had done, and he beat the boy till he was like a battered apple that had been flung from the tree by a storm upon a road.

For a while Joe did not venture to the quarry except on Saturdays and Sundays. He was forbidden by his father to go to church, because the organ and the singing there drove him half crazed. When a beautiful, touching melody was played his eyes became clouded and the tears ran down his cheeks; and when the organ played the Hallelujah Chorus, or some grand and

stirring march, his eyes flashed, and his little body quivered, and he made such faces that the congregation were disturbed and the parson remonstrated with his mother. The child was clearly imbecile and unfit to attend Divine worship.

On one occasion the boy was nearly lost. The military passed through the village on their way to the moor for their summer evolutions and practising. As they traversed the village the band struck up a march. When Joe heard the instruments his whole soul was filled with light, and triumph, and enthusiasm, and he followed the soldiers. After they had got beyond the houses the band ceased to play, but Joe Gander did not return home like the other children, but went on after the military, hoping that the band would strike up again. His hope was crowned. Four miles beyond his village was another, a much larger village, and the band played the Wedding March in 'Lohengrin' as they went through. Then the Gander threw up his head, and put his arms behind his back, and swung his legs, keeping pace, and for joy of heart thought he could have flown. There was no returning now, no thought of it. Six miles farther on was a town, and the band would play its most inspiring music as it entered the streets and marched through the market place. So the Gander went on. He thought nothing of the distance from home, nothing of his empty stomach, nothing of his parents' anger. He thought only of the music. So he went on to the town, and heard the band strike up again. He marched into the town with it, and he would have marched through and away after it had he not been noticed by the bandmaster, who stopped him and spoke to him and told him to go home. But the Gander answered that he wanted to be a soldier. Then the soldiers laughed and an officer came up; and Joe said that he desired to be always with them, that he might hear their music. They gave him some bread and meat, and ordered him to go back whence he had come. After that he was afraid to follow till they were out of sight, but then he went after, running, and hiding, and running on, till a policeman laid hold of him and next day conveyed him back to his parents. Then his father took the broomstick and beat him so unmercifully that he was ill for two days.

Joe had spent a night in the town under the charge of the policeman. He had been kindly treated and allowed to walk about the market place. There he had seen in a shop window something which had filled him with admiration. That thing was a toy fiddle, coloured red, with real catgut strings, a yellow bridge,

and black keys. The bow was strung with white horsehair. On a card affixed to this violin was written the price, three shillings and sixpence. Now little Joe's ambition was fired. He would be perfectly happy if he could have that three shillings and sixpenny fiddle. But how were three shillings and sixpence to be earned?

He confided his difficulty to Postman Roger Gale, and Roger Gale said he would consider the matter.

A couple of days after the postman said to Joe—

'Gander, they want a lad to sweep the leaves in the drive at the Great House. The Squire's coachman told me, and I mentioned you. You'll have to do it on Saturday, and be paid sixpence.'

Joe's face brightened. He went home and told his mother.

'For once you are going to be useful,' said Mrs. Lambole. 'Very well, you shall sweep the drive; then fivepence will come to us, and you shall have a penny every week to spend in sweet-stuff at the post office.'

Joe tried to reckon how long it would be before he could purchase the fiddle, but the calculation was beyond his powers; so he asked the postman, who assured him it would take him forty weeks—that is, about ten months.

Little Joe was not cast down. What was time with such an end in view? Jacob served fourteen years for Rachel, and this was only forty weeks for a fiddle!

Joe was diligent every Saturday sweeping the drive. He was ordered whenever a carriage entered to dive behind the rhododendrons and laurels and disappear. He was of a too ragged and idiotic appearance to show in a gentleman's grounds.

Once or twice he encountered the Squire and stood quaking, with his fingers spread out, his mouth and eyes open, and the broom at his feet. The Squire spoke kindly to him, but Joe Gander was too frightened to reply.

'Poor fellow,' said the Squire to the gardener. 'I suppose it is a charity to employ him, but I must say I should have preferred some one else with his wits about him. I will see about having him sent to an asylum for idiots in which I have some interest. There is no knowing,' said the Squire, 'no knowing but that with wholesome food, cleanliness, and kindness his feeble mind may be got to understand that two and two make four, which I learn he has not yet mastered.'

Every Saturday evening Joe Gander brought his sixpence home to his mother. The mother was not as regular in allowing him his penny out.

'Your edication costs such a lot of money,' she said.

'Mammy, need I go to school any more?'

'Of course you must. You haven't past your standard.'

'But, mammy, I don't think that I ever shall.'

'Then,' said Mrs. Lambole, 'what masses of good food you do eat. You're perfectly insatiable. You cost us more than it would to keep a cow.'

'Oh, mammy, I won't eat so much if I may have my penny!'

'Very well. Eating such a lot does no one good. If you will be content with one slice of bread for breakfast instead of two, and the same for supper, you shall have your penny. If you are so very hungry you can always get a swede or a mangold out of Farmer Eggin's field. Swedes and mangolds are cooling to the blood and sit light on the stomick,' said Mrs. Lambole.

So the compact was made; but it nearly killed Joe. His cheeks and chest fell in deeper and deeper, and his stomach protruded more than ever. His legs seemed hardly able to support him, and his great pale blue wandering eyes seemed ready to start out of his head like the horns of a snail. As for his voice, it was thin and toneless, like the notes on his improvised fiddle, on which he played incessantly.

'The child will always be a discredit to us,' said Lambole. 'He don't look like a human child. He don't think and feel like a Christian. The shovelfuls of dung he might have brought to cover our garden if he had only given his heart to it!'

'I've heard of changelings,' said Mrs. Lambole; 'and with this creetur on our hands I mainly believe the tale. They do say that the pixies steal away the babies of Christian folk, and put their own bantlings in their stead. The only way to find out is to heat a poker red-hot and ram it down the throat of the child; and when you do that the door opens, and in comes the pixy mother and runs off with her own child, and leaves your proper babe behind. That's what we ought to ha' done wi' Joe.'

'I doubt, wife,' the law wouldn't have upheld us,' said Lambole, thrusting hot coals back on to the hearth with his foot.

'I don't suppose it would,' said Mrs. Lambole. 'And yet we call this a land of liberty! Law ain't made for the poor, but for the rich.'

'It is wickedness,' argued the father. 'It is just the same with colts—all wickedness. You must drive it out with the stick.'

And now a great temptation fell on little Gander Joe. The

Squire and his family were at home, and the daughter of the house, Miss Amory, was musical. Her mother played on the piano and the young lady on the violin. The fashion for ladies to play on this instrument had come in, and Miss Amory had had lessons from the best masters in town. She played vastly better than poor Roger Gale, and she played to an accompaniment.

Sometimes whilst Joe was sweeping he heard the music; then he stole nearer and nearer to the house, hiding behind rhododendron bushes, and listening with eyes and mouth and nostrils and ears. The music exercised on him an irresistible attraction. He forgot his obligation to work; he forgot the strict orders he had received not to approach the garden and front of the house. The music acted on him like a spell. Occasionally he was roused from his dream by the gardener, who boxed his ears, knocked him over, and bade him get back to his sweeping. Once a servant came out from Mrs. Amory to tell the ragged little boy not to stand in front of the drawing-room window staring in. On another occasion he was found by Miss Amory crouched behind a rose bush outside her boudoir, listening whilst she practised.

No one supposed that the music drew him. They thought him a fool, and that he had the inquisitiveness of the half-witted to peer in at windows and see the pretty sights within.

He was reprimanded and threatened with dismissal. The gardener complained to the lad's father and advised a good hiding, such as Joe should not forget.

'These sort of chaps,' said the gardener, 'have no senses like rational beings, except only the feeling, and you must teach them as you feed the Polar bears—with the end of a stick.'

One day Miss Amory, seeing how thin and hollow-eyed the child was, and hearing him cough, brought him out a cup of hot coffee and some bread.

He took it without a word, only pulling off his torn straw hat and throwing it at his feet, exposing the full stock of his tow-like hair; then he stared at her out of his great eyes, speechless.

'Joe,' she said, 'poor little man, how old are you?'

'Dun'now,' he answered.

'Can you read and write?'

'No.'

'Nor do sums?'

'No.'

'What can you do?'

'Fiddle.'

'Have you got a fiddle?'

'Yes.'

'I should like to see it and hear you play.'

Next day was Sunday. Little Joe forgot about the day and forgot that Miss Amory would probably be in church in the morning. She had asked to see his fiddle, so in the morning he took it and went down with it to the park. The church was within the grounds, and he had to pass it. As he went by he heard the roll of the organ and the strains of the choir. He stopped and listened, then went up the steps of the churchyard, listening. A desire came on him to catch the air on his improvised violin, and he put it to his shoulder and drew his bow across the slender cords. The sound was very faint, so faint as to be drowned by the greater volume of the organ and the choir. Nevertheless he could hear the feeble tones close to his ear, and his heart danced at the pleasure of playing to an accompaniment, like Miss Amory.

The choir, the congregation, were singing the Advent hymn to Luther's tune—

Great God, what do I see and hear?  
The end of things created.

Little Joe, playing his inaudible instrument, came creeping up the avenue, treading on the fallen yellow lime leaves, passing between the tombstones, drawn on by the solemn, beautiful music. Presently he stood in the porch, then he went on; he was unconscious of everything but the music and the joy of playing with it; he walked on softly into the church without even removing his ragged straw cap, though the Squire and the Squire's wife, and the Rector and the Reverend the Mrs. Rector, and the parish churchwarden and the Rector's churchwarden, and the overseer, and the waywarden, and all the farmers and their wives were present. He had forgotten about his broken cap in the delight that made the tears fill his eyes and trickle over his pale cheeks.

Then when with a shock the parson and the churchwardens saw the ragged urchin coming up the nave fiddling, with his hat on, regardless of the sacredness of the place, and above all of the sacredness of the presence of the Squire, J.P. and D.L., the Rector coughed very loud and looked hard at his churchwarden, farmer Eggins, who turned red as the sun in a November fog, and rose. At the same instant the people's churchwarden

rose, and both advanced upon Joe Gander from opposite sides of the church.

At the moment that they touched him the organ and the singing ceased; and it was to Joe a sudden wakening from a golden dream to a black and raw reality. He looked up with dazed face first at one man, then at the other: both their faces blazed with equal indignation; both were equally speechless with wrath. They conducted him, each holding an arm, out of the porch and down the avenue. Joe heard indistinctly behind him the droning of the Rector's voice continuing the prayers. He looked back over his shoulder and saw the faces of the school children straining after him through the open door from their places near it. On reaching the steps—there was a flight of five leading to the road—the people's churchwarden uttered a loud and disgusted 'Ugh!' then with his heavy hand slapped the head of the child towards the parson's churchwarden, who with his still heavier hand boxed it back again; then the people's churchwarden gave him a blow which sent him staggering forward, and this was supplemented by a kick from the parson's churchwarden, which sent Joe Gander spinning down the five steps at once and cast him prostrate into the road, where he fell and crushed his extemporised violin.

Then the churchwardens turned, blew their noses, and re-entered the church, where they sat out the rest of the service, grateful in their hearts that they had been enabled that day to show that their office was no sinecure.

The churchwardens were unaware that in banging and kicking the little boy out of the churchyard and into the road they had flung him so that he fell with his head upon the curbstone of the footpath, which stone was of slate and sharp. They did not find this out through the prayers nor through the sermon. But when the whole congregation left the church, they were startled to find little Joe Gander insensible with his head cut, and a pool of blood on the footway. The Squire was shocked, as were his wife and daughter, and the churchwardens were in consternation. Fortunately the Squire's stables were near the church and there was a running fountain there, so that water was procured and the child revived.

Mrs. Amory had in the meantime hastened home and returned with a roll of diachylon plaster and a pair of small scissors. Strips of the adhesive plaster were applied to the wound, and the boy was soon sufficiently recovered to stand on his feet, when the

churchwardens very considerably undertook to march him home. On reaching his cottage the churchwardens described what had taken place, painting the insult offered to the worshippers in the most hideous colours and representing the accident of the cut as due to the violent resistance offered by the culprit to their ejection of him. Then each pressed a half-crown into the hand of Mr. Lambole and departed to his dinner.

‘Now then, young shaver,’ exclaimed the father, ‘at your pranks again! How often have I told you not to go intruding into a place of worship? Church ain’t for such as you. If you hadn’t been punished a bit already wouldn’t I larrup you neither? Oh no!’

Little Joe’s head was bad for some days. His cheeks were flushed and his eyes bright, and he talked strangely—he who was usually so silent. What troubled him was the loss of his fiddle; he did not know what had become of it, whether it had been stolen or confiscated. He asked after it, and when at last it was produced, smashed to chips, with the strings torn and hanging loose about it like the cordage of a broken vessel, he cried bitterly. Miss Amory came to the cottage to see him, and finding father and mother out, went in and pressed five shillings into his hand. Then he laughed with delight, and clapped his hands, and hid the money away in his pocket, but he said nothing, and Miss Amory went away convinced that the child was half a fool. But little Joe had sense in his head, though his head was different from those of others; he knew that now he had the money wherewith to buy the beautiful fiddle he had seen in the shop window many months before, and to get which he had worked and denied himself food.

When Miss Amory was gone, and his mother had not returned, he opened the door of the cottage and stole out. He was afraid of being seen, so he crept along in the hedge, and when he thought anyone was coming he got through a gate or lay down in a ditch, till he was some way on his road to the town. Then he ran till he was tired. He had a bandage round his head, and, as his head was hot, he took the rag off, dipped it in water, and tied it round his head again. Never in his life had his mind been clearer than it was now, for now he had a distinct purpose, and an object easily attainable, before him. He held the money in his hand, and looked at it, and kissed it; then held it to his beating heart, then ran on. He lost breath. He could run no more. He sat down in the hedge and gasped. The perspiration

was streaming off his face. Then he thought he heard steps coming fast along the road he had run, and he feared lest he were pursued, so he got up and ran on.

He went through the village four miles from home just as the children were leaving school, and when they saw him some of the elder cried out that here was 'Gander Joe! quack! quack! Joe the Gander! quack! quack! quack!' and the little ones joined in the banter; and the boy ran on, though hot and exhausted, and with his head swimming, to escape their merriment.

He got on some way beyond the village when he came to a turnpike. There he felt dizzy, and he timidly asked if he might have a bit of bread. He would pay for it if they would change a shilling. The woman at the 'pike pitied the pale, hollow-eyed child, and questioned him; but her questions bewildered him, and he feared she would send him home, so that he either answered nothing, or in a way which made her think him distraught. She gave him some bread and water, and watched him going on towards the town till he was out of sight. The day was already declining; it would be dark by the time he reached the town. But he did not think of that. He did not consider where he would sleep, whether he would have strength to return ten miles to his home. He thought only of the beautiful red violin with the yellow bridge hung in the shop window, and offered for three shillings and sixpence. Three and sixpence! Why, he had five shillings. He had money to spend on other things beside the fiddle. He had been sadly disappointed about his savings from the weekly sixpence. He had asked for them; he had earned them, not by his work only, but by his abstention from two pieces of bread per diem. When he asked for his money, his mother answered that she had put it away in the savings bank. If he had it he would waste it on sweetstuff; if it were hoarded up it would help him on in life when left to shift for himself; and if he died, why it would go towards his burying.

So the child had been disappointed in his calculations, and had worked and starved for nothing. Then came Miss Amory with her present, and he had run away with that lest his mother should take it from him to put in the savings bank for setting him up in life or for his burying. What cared he for either? All his ambition was to have a fiddle, and a fiddle was to be had for three and sixpence.

Joe Gander was tired. He was fain to sit down at intervals on the heaps of stones by the roadside to rest. His shoes were

very poor, with soles worn through, so that the stones hurt his feet. At this time of the year the highways were fresh metalled, and as he stumbled over the newly broken stones they cut his soles and his ankles turned. He was footsore and weary in body, but his heart never failed him. Before him shone the red violin with the yellow bridge, and the beautiful bow strung with shining white hair. When he had that all his weariness would pass as a dream; he would hunger no more, cry no more, feel no more sickness or faintness. He would draw the bow over the strings and play with his fingers on the catgut, and the waves of music would thrill and flow, and away on those melodious waves his soul would float far from trouble, far from want, far from tears, into a shining, sunny world of music.

So he picked himself up when he fell, and staggered to his feet from the stones on which he rested, and pressed on.

The sun was setting as he entered the town. He went straight to the shop he so well remembered, and to his inexpressible delight saw still in the window the well-remembered violin, price three shillings and sixpence.

Then he timidly entered the shop, and with trembling hand held out the money.

‘What do you want?’

‘It,’ said the boy. It. To him the shop held but one article. The dolls, the wooden horses, the tin steam-engines, the bats, the kites, were unconsidered. He had seen and remembered only one thing—the red violin. ‘It,’ said the boy and pointed.

When little Joe had got the violin he pressed it to his shoulder, and his heart bounded as though it would have burst the pigeon breast. His dull eyes lightened and into his white sunken cheeks shot a hectic flame. He went forth with his head erect and with firm foot, holding his fiddle to the shoulder and the bow in hand.

He turned his face homeward. Now he would return to father and mother, to his little bed at the head of the stairs, to his scanty meals, to the school, to the sweeping of the park drive, and to his mother’s scoldings and his father’s beatings. He had his fiddle, and he cared for nothing else.

He waited till he was out of the town before he tried it. Then, when he was on a lonely part of the road, he seated himself in the hedge, under a holly tree covered with scarlet berries, and tried his instrument. Alas! it had hung many years in the shop window, and the catgut was old and the glue had lost its tenacity. One string started; then when he tried to screw up a second, it

sprang as well, and then the bridge collapsed and fell. Moreover the hairs on the bow came out. They were unresined.

Then little Joe's spirits gave way. He laid the bow and the violin on his knees and began to cry.

As he cried he heard the sound of approaching wheels and the clatter of a horse's hoofs.

He heard, but he was immersed in sorrow and did not heed and raise his head to see who was coming. Had he done so he would have seen nothing, as his eyes were swimming with tears. Looking out of them he saw only as one sees who opens his eyes when diving.

'Halloa, young shaver! Dang you! What do you mean giving me such a cursed hunt after you as this—you as ain't worth the trouble, eh?'

The voice was that of his father, who drew up before him. Mr. Lambole had made inquiries when it was discovered that Joe was lost, first at the school, where it was most unlikely he would be found, then at the public house, at the gardener's and the game-keeper's; then he had looked down the well and then up the chimney. After that he went to the cottage in the quarry. Roger Gale knew nothing of him. Presently some one coming from the nearest village mentioned that he had been seen there; whereupon Lambole borrowed farmer Eggins's trap and went after him, peering right and left of the road with his one eye.

Sure enough he had been through the village. He had passed the turnpike. The woman there described him accurately as 'a sort of a tottle' (fool).

Mr. Lambole was not a pleasant-looking man; he was as solidly built as a navvy. The backs of his hands were hairy, and his fist was so hard and his blows so weighty that for sport he was wont to knock down and kill at a blow the oxen sent to Butcher Robbins for slaughter, and that he did with his fist alone, hitting the animal on the head between the horns, a little forward of the horns. That was a great feat of strength, and Lambole was proud of it. He had a long back and short legs. The back was not pliable or bending; it was hard, braced with sinews tough as hawsers, and supported a pair of shoulders that could sustain the weight of an ox.

His face was of a coppery colour, caused by exposure to the air and drinking. His hair was light: that was almost the only feature his son had derived from him. It was very light, too light for his dark red face. It grew about his neck and under his chin as a Newgate collar; there was a great deal of it, and his

face, encircled by the pale hair, looked like an angry moon surrounded by a fog bow.

Mr. Lambole had a queer temper. He bottled up his anger, but when it blew the cork out it spurted over and splashed all his home; it flew in the faces and soused everyone who came near him.

Mr. Lambole took his son roughly by the arm and lifted him into the tax cart. The boy offered no resistance. His spirit was broken, his hopes extinguished. For months he had yearned for the red fiddle, price three and six, and now that, after great pains and privations, he had acquired it the fiddle would not sound.

'Ain't you ashamed of yourself, giving your dear dada such trouble, eh, Viper?'

Mr. Lambole turned the horse's head homeward. He had his black patch towards the little Gander, seated in the bottom of the cart, hugging his wrecked violin. When Mr. Lambole spoke he turned his face round to bring the active eye to bear on the shrinking, crouching little figure below.

The Viper made no answer, but looked up. Mr. Lambole turned his face away, and the seeing eye watched the horse's ears and the black patch was towards a frightened, piteous, pleading little face, looking up, with the light of the evening sky irradiating it, showing how wan it was, how hollow were the cheeks, how sunken the eyes, how sharp the little pinched nose. The boy put up his arm, that held the bow, and wiped his eyes with his sleeve. In so doing he poked his father in the ribs with the end of the bow.

'Now, then!' exclaimed Mr. Lambole with an oath, 'what darn'd insolence be you up to now, Gorilla?'

If he had not held the whip in one hand and the reins in the other he would have taken the bow from the child and flung it into the road. He contented himself with rapping Joe's head with the end of the whip.

'What's that you've got there, eh?' he asked.

The child replied timidly, 'Please, father, a fiddle.'

'Where did you get 'un—steal it, eh?'

Joe answered, trembling, 'No, dada, I bought it.'

'Bought it! Where did you get the money?'

'Miss Amory gave it me.'

'How much?'

The Gander answered, 'Her gave me five shilling.'

'Five shillings! And what did that blessed' (he did not say 'blessed,' but something quite the reverse) 'fiddle cost you?'

'Three and sixpence.'

'So you've only one and six left?'

'I've none, dada.'

'Why not?'

'Because I spent one shilling on a pipe for you, and sixpence on a thimble for mother as a present,' answered the child, with a flicker of hope in his dim eyes that this would propitiate his father.

'Dash me,' roared the roadmaker, 'if you, ain't worse nor the Markis of Salisbury, as would rob us of the franchise! What in the name of Thunder and Bones do you mean squandering the precious money over fooleries like that for? I've got my pipe, black as your back shall be before to-morrow, and mother has an old thimble as full o' holes as I'll make your skin before the night is much older. Wait till we get home, and I'll make pretty music out of that there fiddle! just you see if I don't.'

Joe shivered in his seat and his head fell.

Mr. Lambole had a playful wit. He beguiled his journey home by indulging in it, and his humour flashed above the head of the child like summer lightning. 'You're hardly expecting the abundance of the supper that's awaiting you,' he said, with his black patch glowering down at the irresponsive heap in the corner of the cart. 'No stinting of the dressing, I can tell you. You like your meat well basted, don't you? The basting shall not incur your disapproval as insufficient. Underdone? Oh dear, no! Nothing underdone for me. Pickles? I can promise you that there is something in pickle for you, hot—very hot and stinging. Plenty of capers—mutton and capers. Mashed potatoes? Was the request for that on the tip of your tongue? Sorry I can give you only half what you want—the mash, not the potatoes. There is nothing comparable in my mind to young pig with crackling. The hide is well striped, cut in lines from the neck to the tail. I think we'll have crackling on our pig before morning.'

He now threw his seeing eye into the depths of the cart, to note the effect his fun had on the child, but he was disappointed. It had evoked no hilarity. Joe had fallen asleep, exhausted by his walk, worn out with disappointments, with his head on his fiddle, that lay on his knees. The jogging of the cart, the attitude, affected his wound; the plaster had given way, and the blood was running over the little red fiddle and dripping into its hollow body through the F-hole on each side.

It was too dark for Mr. Lambole to notice this. He set his lips. His self-esteem was hurt at the child not relishing his waggery.

Mrs. Lambole observed it when, shortly after, the cart drew up at the cottage and she lifted the sleeping child out.

'I must take the cart back to Farmer Eggins,' said her husband; 'duty first and pleasure after.'

When his father was gone Mrs. Lambole said, 'Now then, Joe, you've been a very wicked, bad boy, and God will never forgive you for the naughtiness you have committed and the trouble to which you have put your poor father and me.' She would have spoken more sharply but that his head needed her care and the sight of the blood disarmed her. Moreover she knew that her husband would not pass over what had occurred with a reprimand. 'Get off your clothes and go to bed, Joe,' she said when she had readjusted the plaster. 'You may take a piece of dry bread with you, and I'll see if I can't persuade your father to put off whipping of you for a day or two.'

Joe began to cry.

'There,' she said, 'don't cry. When wicked children do wicked things they must suffer for them. It is the law of nature. And,' she went on, 'you ought to be that ashamed of yourself that you'd be glad for the earth to open under you and swallow you up like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Running away from so good and happy a home and such tender parents! But I reckon you be lost to natural affection, as you be to reason.'

'May I take my fiddle with me?' asked the boy.

'Oh, take your fiddle if you like,' answered his mother. 'Much good may it do you. Here, it's all smeared wi' blood. Let me wipe it first, or you'll mess the bedclothes with it. There,' she said as she gave him the broken instrument. 'Say your prayers and go to sleep; though I reckon your prayers will never reach to heaven, coming out of such a wicked, unnatural heart.'

'Kiss me, mammy.'

'No, I will not; you don't deserve it.'

So the little Gander went to his bed. The cottage had but one bedroom and a landing above the steep and narrow flight of steps that led to it from the kitchen. On this landing was a small truckle bed, on which Joe slept. He took off his clothes and stood in his little short shirt of very coarse white linen. He knelt down and said his prayers, with both his hands spread over his fiddle. Then he got into bed, and until his mother fetched

away the benzoline lamp he examined the instrument. He saw that the bridge might be set up again with a little glue, and that fresh catgut strings might be supplied. He would take his fiddle next day to Roger Gale and ask him to help and mend it for him. He was sure Roger would take an interest in it. Roger had been mysterious of late, hinting that the time was coming when Joey would have a first-rate instrument and learn to play like a Paganini. Yes; the case of the red fiddle was not desperate.

Just then he heard the door below open and his father's step.

'Where is the toad?' asked Mr. Lambole.

Joe held his breath and his blood ran cold. He could hear every word, every sound in the room below.

'He's gone to bed,' answered Mrs. Lambole. 'Leave the poor little creetur alone to-night, Samuel; his head has been bad and he don't look well. He's over-done.'

'Susan,' said the roadmaker, 'I've been simmering all the way to town, and bubbling and boiling all the way back, and busting is what I be now, and bust I will.'

Little Joe sat up in bed, hugging his violin, and his tow-like hair stood up on his head. His great stupid eyes stared wide with fear; in the dark the iris in each had grown big, and deep, and solemn.

'Give me my stick,' said Mr. Lambole. 'I've promised him a taste of it, and a taste won't suffice to-night; he must have a gorge of it.'

'I've put it away,' said Mrs. Lambole. 'Samuel, right is right, and I'm not one to stand between my child and what he deserves, but he ain't in condition for it to-night. He wants feeding up to it.'

Without wasting another word on her the roadmaker went upstairs.

The shuddering, cowering little fellow saw first the red face, surrounded by a halo of pale hair, rise above the floor, then the strong square shoulders, then the clenched hands, and then his father stood before him, revealed down to his thick boots. The child crept back in the bed against the wall, and would have disappeared through it had the wall been soft-hearted, as in fairy tales, and opened to receive him. He clasped his little violin tight to his heart, and then the blood that had fallen into it trickled out and ran down his shirt, staining it, upon the bed-clothes, staining them. But the father did not see this. He was

effervescing with fury. His pulses went at a gallop and his great fists clutched spasmodically.

‘You Judas Iscariot, come here!’ he shouted.

But the child only pressed closer against the wall.

‘What! disobedient and daring? Do you hear? Come to me!’

The trembling child pointed to a pretty little pipe on the bedclothes. He had drawn it from his pocket and taken the paper off it, and laid it there, and stuck the silver-headed thimble in the bowl for his mother when she came up to take the lamp.

‘Come here, vagabond!’

He could not; he had not the courage nor the strength. He still pointed pleadingly to the little presents he had bought with his eighteenpence.

‘You won’t, you dogged, insulting being?’ roared the roadmaker, and rushed at him, knocking over the pipe, which fell and broke on the floor, and trampling flat the thimble. ‘You won’t yet? Always full of sulks and defiance! Oh, you ungrateful one, you!’ Then he had him by the collar of his night-shirt and dragged him from his bed, and with his violence tore the button off, and with his other hand he wrenched the violin away and beat the child over the back with it as he dragged him from the bed.

‘Mammy! mammy!’ cried Joe.

But the mother did not interfere. She had entered her protest and so cleared her conscience.

Now the roadmaker’s wrath exploded. He beat the boy with the fiddle till the fiddle went to pieces. He carried the little white figure into the bedroom, as there was not room on the landing for him to swing his arm without striking his knuckles against roof-rafters or wall.

‘Mammy! mammy!’ still cried Joey as he was dragged through the door. His father held him and shook him as he might have held and shaken a white kitten. His weight was nothing. A kitten would have clawed and bitten. Joe did neither; he only cried piteously for the only one who might have helped him. ‘Mammy! mammy!’ He knew instinctively that it was in vain for him to appeal to his father.

When the fiddle was broken to pieces, the roadmaker, still unappeased, his sense of justice unsatisfied, drew the wooden bar from the window blind. The blind was of gauze, screening the room from those who passed in the road. Mr. Lambole pulled the bar that sustained the muslin out of its hem. Whilst thus engaged

the little boy lay on the floor, with his head down and his hands outspread. In the floor was a knot, and through the knot he could see into the kitchen, where sat his mother darning his father's stockings. Mrs. Lambole's face was flushed and her hands moved very fast.

'Oh, mammy dear! Oh, mammy!' called the child through the knot-hole.

Then Mrs. Lambole stood up and said aloud, 'Come, Samuel, that's plenty. Enough is as good as a feast.'

But Samuel had just at that moment drawn out the bar, and he must needs try it. So he caught up little Joe and struck him with it again and again and again. In his fury it mattered nothing to him where and how hard he smote.

And now the child ceased to call for mammy. It would almost seem as though this little hollow fiddle with its feeble strings were also broken.

There was a musical party that same evening at the Hall. Miss Amory played beautifully, with extraordinary feeling and execution, both with and without accompaniment, on the piano. Several gentlemen and ladies sang and played; there were duets and trios.

During the performances the guests talked to each other in low tones about various topics.

Said one lady to Mrs. Amory, 'How strange it is that among the English lower classes there is no love of music.'

'There is none at all,' answered Mrs. Amory; 'our rector's wife has given herself great trouble to get up parochial entertainments, but we find that nothing takes with the people but comic songs, and these, instead of elevating, vulgarise them.'

'They have no music in them. The only people with music in their souls are the Germans and the Italians.'

'Yes,' said Mrs. Amory with a sigh; 'it is sad but true: there is neither poetry nor picturesqueness nor music among the English peasantry.'

'You have never heard of one, self-taught, with a real love of music in this country?'

'Never: such do not exist among us.'

Next day little Joey Gander could not leave his bed. Over it was thrown a coarse blanket and a patchwork quilt. He was very quiet, he said nothing, but he tried with his weak little

fingers to squeeze into shape the thimble he had bought for mammy, which dada had trampled flat. There are other things beside crushed thimbles which cannot be shaped again.

The fiddle was past all mending; it was reduced to a mass of chips, and with these Mrs. Lambole lighted her fire. The chips were so dry—the fiddle had stood so many years in the shop window—that they burnt briskly and sent up a merry flame.

On the second day little Joe was still in bed, but not working at the thimble. He had given that up. His fingers were inert. His great dreamy eyes looked out at the tiny pane of glass that lighted the staircase and landing, a pane of glass let into the roof, but through that he could see the sky.

Several times his mother came upstairs to ask if he wanted anything, but he shook his head.

At last he said feebly, 'Mother, do you think God will forgive me my great wickedness and let me into heaven?'

'Oh, yes, no doubt of it,' answered the rough woman.

'And—will He give me a fiddle there?'

'Fiddle!' echoed Mrs. Lambole aghast, 'fiddle! Of course not. There be other things to be minded there than giving of fiddles to little Ganders.'

Then Joe drew a long sigh. He had never sighed so deeply before. That had been his last hope, and that was taken from him. But if he had never so sighed before he never so sighed again.

Just then the golden sun stood over the tiny pane in the roof, and shone down on the little white face and the eyes looking up into the light, with a listening, wondering expression in them, and it turned the poor tow-like hair into a halo of glory.

There was a rap at the door downstairs.

'Mrs. Lambole in?'

The voice was that of the postman, Roger Gale.

'I've heard,' he said, 'that the little chap be ill, and I've come to see him and bring him a regular beautiful little fiddle I've bought for him. I've been saving up and got it at last. Though a little 'un it's a first-rater, and rare music will Joey bring out of it.'

'It's too late, Mr. Gale; Joey Gander's gone.'

## *In the Cloisters.*

**I**N this dim sepulchre of loveless death,  
 Where to my aching ear pass to and fro  
 Footfalls of weary men who once drew breath,  
 Soft echoes of the voices long ago,  
 I stand and hearken : and methinks one saith,  
 ‘ I lived and loved ; who now my love may know ? ’  
 And lo, another, ‘ Wherefore serves my faith ? ’  
 And yet a third, ‘ Who reaps where I did sow ? ’

Here in the wind-swept court the sodden clay  
 Is wet with tears of unremembered pain ;  
 Heaven’s courts are filled with prayers which sick hearts  
 say ;—  
 What soothing answer cometh back again ?  
 Only the winds that mock us in their play,  
 Nought but the voiceless splash of sullen rain.

W. L. COURTNEY.

## *Hoisting the Union Jack in New Guinea.*

ON October 29, H.M.S. *Nelson*, commanded by Commodore J. E. Erskine, A.D.C., left Sydney for the purpose of proclaiming a protectorate over the southern shores of New Guinea, eastward of the 141st meridian.

After having called in at Brisbane, the *Nelson* arrived at Port Moresby, New Guinea, on Sunday, November 2. The entrance to the harbour looked very beautiful, owing to the long ranges of hills on either side and the bright opal green of the water lying among the innumerable reefs.

Fires were seen on the hills as the ship approached, probably signals passed along the coast, notifying the arrival of the 'Grandmother Ship,' as the natives called the big man-of-war, which they had been told to expect. All on board were astonished to find the Union Jack already flying over the missionary's house as well as over that of the chief. We learnt, however, that a flag had been hoisted two days previously by Mr. Deputy Commissioner Romilly, as a preliminary measure, before the arrival of the Commodore.

The *Nelson* anchored off the native village, which at Port Moresby is built on piles along the shore right out in the sea, the war canoes being moored close alongside, thus affording a ready means of escape should an attack be made on the inhabitants by their foes from the hills.

The Commodore despatched H.M.S. *Raven* and H.M.S. *Espiègle* to cruise along the coast, one to the east and the other to the west, for the purpose of proclaiming to the chiefs the approaching ceremony of establishing a protectorate over this portion of New Guinea. This involved a delay of two days, during which time the officers of the ship had opportunities of seeing something of the manners and customs of the natives and of exploring the country round about Port Moresby. The mainland consists of high ranges of hills as far as the eye can reach, with the lofty Owen Stanley mountains in the distance. The

land at first view appears bleak and uninteresting, more nearly resembling the parched slopes of Australia than the thickly wooded bush of the South Sea Islands. Around the mainland are several small islands, which afford excellent quail shooting, though, as the ground is apparently a coral reef, covered with short dry scrub, the sportsman has need of much endurance. The natives on this part of the coast wear enormous heads of hair, something in the Fiji fashion, though without their tidy, well-cared-for appearance. For ornament they mostly have a semicircle of mother-of-pearl shell round the neck, with a quill like that of a porcupine passed through the nose, the curves of the quill pointed upwards, which gives a fierce appearance to their faces. The men are devoid of clothing, while the women wear short skirts of grass round their waists. The two days being over, the *Espiègle* and *Raven* reappeared, each having on board some ten chiefs from the adjoining coast to be present at the ceremony of hoisting of the flag on the morrow. About twenty chiefs had also been hastily collected at Port Moresby, but unfortunately many of the most influential men had that morning left in their large war-canoes to trade some sixty miles along the coast, as a fair wind for the voyage was blowing, and the natives were unwilling to lose the opportunity. However, in the afternoon some forty chiefs came off to the *Nelson*, which was gaily decorated with flags for the occasion. With the natives came as interpreters Mr. Laws and Mr. Chalmers, the two well-known and deservedly popular missionaries, who probably know more of New Guinea and of its people than any Europeans now living.

The palaver commenced by the chiefs being invited to sit in rows on the quarter-deck, while each man was provided with a bowl of rice and jam, which the missionaries had suggested as the kind of food most likely to be appreciated. Not knowing what was about to happen, the natives acted on the ancient maxim, *carpe diem*, troubling nothing about the great palaver, and allowing none of their new and novel surroundings to distract them from the business of the moment. All gave their undivided attention to the food before them, each one as he finished his bowl gazing round to see which of his neighbours had the fullest basin still remaining, and then without ceremony digging his spoon into it until that also was finished.

After the feeding, the band struck up, much to the wonderment and delight of the visitors. Then the Commodore came on deck,

and in a well-chosen address spoke to the assembled chiefs, assuring them of the good-will of the Queen, and explaining the meaning of the ceremony that would take place in the morning. The Commodore then summoned Boivagi, chief of Port Moresby, who, though not a great fighting chief, yet is one who possesses great influence amongst the people. To him the Commodore gave a long ebony stick with a florin inlaid on the top, the Queen's head uppermost, telling him that this was his staff of office, which was to be regarded by others as a symbol of the authority wielded by him for the dispensation of justice and for maintaining order amongst all those in his district. The Commodore then shook hands with him and introduced this first recognised chief in New Guinea to Mr. Deputy Commissioner Romilly, who is to assume the reins of government until the arrival of the Governor of New Guinea. All this was interpreted by Mr. Laws, who speaks the language with great fluency. It was then explained to them that there would be some firing to afford them an opportunity of judging of the power of the Queen, whose friends and allies they were in future to be. Accordingly, several rounds were fired from a Nordenfeldt gun and from a Gatling in the top; but there were only a few of the natives who could be persuaded to watch the target and follow the course of the shot, the majority trembling with terror and cowering on deck, their faces hidden in their hands. A shell was then fired from one of the 18-ton guns, and this had a far greater success, for when the shell burst in the distance there was a universal yell of delight from the hitherto undemonstrative chiefs. They were then marshalled in line, and each one in turn went aft to the Commodore's cabin, where he presented them with gifts of hatchets and tobacco. The palaver was now finished, and after being loaded with ship's biscuit by the blue-jackets as they went down the gangway, the chiefs of New Guinea departed to reflect on all they had seen and heard that day.

They were of various types, these men: some very old and shabby, with bald heads, others with large bushy hair, decorated with shells and feathers of birds of Paradise; others were close cropped and curly headed. One of these latter was boasting how he had killed men, women, and children, and in token thereof pointed to three lines of tattoo across his chest, which are only permitted to be worn by one who has slain an enemy in battle. To wear this mark of distinction without having earned it in the ordinary way is an offence that is visited by death. Many bore

marks of spear wounds, telling of hard-fought battles. One old chief explained how only last night up the coast his foes had fired his village and slain his brother, but he scarcely seemed overcome with grief, judging from the manner he had appeared to enjoy the jam part of the palaver. In the evening they were to be still further astonished by the electric light turned on the village, while rockets were sent up from all the ships in harbour; and to add to the terrors of this wonderful night the steam siren yelled its hideous music, which, being echoed back from the shore, must have filled with dismay the warriors who had left that morning in their canoes, and who could not yet be far distant. Next morning, it appeared that the voice of this unlovely siren was taken for the baying of a 'great, big, angry dog,' and several natives fled to the hills to escape its clutches, while others imagined the ship was hungry, and was groaning aloud for food. This particular siren has much to answer for in the way of striking terror to the uncivilised, having in New Zealand been thought by the natives to be the voice of the devil; while in one of the adjacent islands an old lady declared it must be the last trump, and accordingly made all preparations for making a decent departure from the world.

November 6 was the day on which the Union Jack was for the first time hoisted in New Guinea by command of the Queen, though on other occasions it has been flown, as for instance, some eighteen months before by Mr. Chester, chief magistrate of Thursday Island, when the English Government subsequently refused to recognise such annexation. To-day, however, the Union Jack has been hoisted with full honours by the Commodore of the Australian station. At 6.30 a force of some 200 blue-jackets was landed from H.M. ships *Nelson*, *Espiègle*, *Raven*, and *Harrier*. The Commodore and staff landed in the barge, and were received by a guard of honour of Marines under the command of Major Dowding. The band playing, the whole party marched up a steep hill, where stand the houses of the mission. Here the men were drawn up in three sides of a square, the colours in the centre facing the Commodore and staff, who stood on the verandah of the house. From this eminence the Commodore, with Mr. Romilly on his right, read the proclamation declaring it as the intention of the Queen of England to establish a Protectorate over these shores. The flag was then hoisted, the band playing 'God save the Queen.' A royal salute was fired from the *Nelson* in harbour, and a *feu-de-joie* was fired by the

blue-jackets and Marines. The Commodore then called for three cheers for the Queen, which were given by the men with customary heartiness. The chief Boivagi was then again received by the Commodore and Mr. Romilly, and the ceremony ended. It was a trying morning's work, however, as the sun, even at that comparatively early hour, was excessively powerful; and when, all safe returned on board, the events of the day were being discussed, not a few of those who had helped to annex New Guinea were heard to complain of violent headache.

On November 7 the *Nelson* anchored in Hall's Sound, some four miles off the shore. Parties immediately proceeded on shore to explain that our visit was a friendly one, but as such explanation required time, it was more than probable that the boats would be received with a volley of spears. However, the natives appeared much disconcerted at our approach, and more inclined to run away than offer any hostility. Mr. Chalmers went on shore, and proceeded to interview the people with the aid of an interpreter, as they speak another dialect to that of Port Moresby. After some hours on shore, it was agreed that the chiefs should come off to see the Commodore in the morning, and that in the afternoon the flag should be hoisted as before. The country here was far more cultivated and tropical in appearance, bananas and mummy apples growing in profusion. All along the shore were large mangrove swamps, which seemed literally alive with pigeons. On the morning of the 8th the chiefs came off as before, and with them Queen Kolaloha,<sup>1</sup> queen of this particular village, and the only woman holding authority in the whole of New Guinea. The same palaver, with a repetition of jam, rice, and presents, went on on board, and later in the day a force of some two hundred men was transhipped to the *Raven*, which was able to go closer inland than the *Nelson*, which is obliged to lie far out from the shore in these reef-covered seas. It was a work of some time getting on board the *Raven*, and then again embarking in boats to land all the men. By three o'clock we were all on shore, and after the Commodore had been received on the beach, a move was made to a plot of land in front of the Mission House, which is just behind the native village, where a native teacher and his wife live, who appear to have great influence with the inhabitants. The chiefs were all grouped in the middle of the square formed by the

<sup>1</sup> Queen Kolaloha, daughter of a most popular chief, who, on his death-bed, asked his people to let her rule over them, instead of his sons, as being more fitted. They acceded, though never before had a woman reigned in New Guinea.

blue-jackets and Marines, and marvellous they were to behold. Most noticeable of all was of course her Majesty the Queen, a short fat woman about thirty years old—a short grass petticoat around her waist, and her body most beautifully tattooed all over in little blue zigzags; a chief behind her, who was evidently the great swell of the party in the matter of appearance, had an enormous bird of Paradise in his hair, arranged as to the tail so that the feather made a kind of halo round his head, while the hair behind was caught up into a chignon and transfixed with many a curious comb of shells and feathers. His face was painted a brilliant yellow occasionally picked out with black, while his arms were encased as if in armour with broad shell bangles, bound together so as to look like one long armlet—truly a wonderful get-up, and one which must have cost the poor chief much time and trouble. Not far from him sat one who was in mourning for his mother. Perfectly black was he painted from head to foot, his arms adorned with black plumes from many a dusky bird, while on his head were regular tiers of crowns of black feathers to the height of about three feet, black beads around his forehead, and tight black bands around his waist and arms. All the smartest chiefs had bands and armlets so tight that they were buried in their flesh, while the broad waist-belt was tightened till their waist reminded one of many a fashionable London belle; and as most of these men, who were suffering for their appearance sake, carried their elbows at right angles to their sides, to enable their tightened lungs to breathe more freely, the resemblance seemed more complete. All sat sedate till the firing of the *feu-de-joie*, and then it was a study to watch the faces thus grouped in the centre of the blue-jackets and Marines, who were firing over their heads. I verily believe that the majority imagined that the word had been given for a general massacre to take place, for such abject signs of terror could have been produced by no other idea. The man in mourning plumes beat his head sadly upon the earth, while hiding his face with the feathers on his arms; the masher with the yellow face desisted from his occupation of scraping the paint from his burning eyes with a leaf, and after two or three attempts to smile, as though he had met a *feu-de-joie* every day of his life, most hopelessly broke down, and buried his shining countenance in the lap of his no less terrified neighbour. As for the Queen, she dissolved into a flood of royal tears, utterly ignoring the attempts at consolation offered by her consort. The firing over, all straightened themselves and endeavoured to appear as

though they had never moved from their former dignified positions, while each looked at his neighbour with comical glance of inquiry, as though to see how much of his former fear had been observed. Presents of birds of Paradise and native grass shirts were then brought to the Commodore, and after a general farewell we hurried off to the boats, from the boats to the *Raven*, then once more to the boats, and finally on board our own big ship. If headaches were the order of the day at Port Moresby, we little knew what an ordeal was still before us, for during the ceremony of this afternoon the sun was fiercer on the sandy soil than any one of us who had been in tropical countries had ever before experienced, and standing bare-headed in this awful heat during the firing of the royal salute was, to say the least, unpleasant; but, as no ill has come of it, sunstroke must be of rarer occurrence than is generally supposed.

Early next morning the anchor was up, and we made a start for Motu Motu, some fifty miles along the coast. Great interest was felt in our next landing, as we were to see real *bonâ-fide* savages, who had only once seen a white man, and amongst whom the native teachers of the missionaries had only as yet been for three months. We anchored a very long way off the shore, at least six miles; the coast lay inside a barrier of breakers that broke with great force upon the beach, the country around being one long line of cocoa-nuts and banana trees. The inhabitants along this shore are estimated at 20,000, are known as great warriors and very brave men. A whaleboat and a cutter were sent ashore, although it was rather late in the afternoon, to give the officers a chance of seeing the place that evening. Arrived at the breakers, the cutter anchored, and waited to profit by the experience of the whaler. After one or two attempts, during which she was nearly capsized in the surf, the boat managed to get near the beach, all its occupants wetted to the skin. The natives rushed out fearlessly into the seething water, and surrounded us in hundreds. They pulled the boat high and dry, and then all endeavoured to shake hands with us at once. The chattering, screaming, and the loudness of their welcome would be impossible to describe. We were all mobbed and hemmed in on all sides with what we understood to be protestations of welcome. Of course the first thing to do was to signal to the cutter that if she attempted to go through the surf she would inevitably capsize, so none of her passengers could get ashore, except one undaunted midshipman, who managed to scramble into a tiny canoe that came to inspect them, and on

this frail craft, escorted by swimming natives, safely reached the land. He had even a more enthusiastic welcome than the first people, and the natives appeared to be delighted at his so thoroughly trusting to their good-will, and rushing amongst them unarmed in this confiding manner. Being a very young officer of the pink and white kind, with a baby face, he excited the utmost interest, and was patted and pinched all over as though these now hospitable natives were informing each other what a nice little tit-bit he would have made had we come as enemies; but these remarks in no way disconcerted this enterprising youth, and he walked off to the village with an admiring crowd of 300 of the wildest-looking savages that civilised man has ever beheld. That evening the chiefs came off to the ship, and, as Mr. Chalmers arrived in the *Raven* with many more, there was a goodly muster after dinner on the main deck. They were, as before, made happy by means of a smoke and basins of rice and jam, and then the palaver commenced. The chief man was presented by the Commodore with his staff of office, and after the hoisting of the flag had been explained to them, presents were distributed. They seemed most intelligent, and quite able to comprehend the position, though very particular to ask if it was true that their wives and lands were to be secured to them. Satisfied on this point, they did not seem to care much what else was done. The chiefs remained on board all night, and were most interesting additions to the after-dinner smoking circle round the after gun.

Next morning, at six o'clock, a start was made for the shore, everyone much wondering how 200 men could be landed in the surf. However, it was done in time, the cutters anchoring off the breakers, and whaleboats making frequent journeys to and fro till everyone was on shore. Of course everyone was wet; boats filled with water, swimming and wading, rolling over in the surf, and being hauled by the natives on to the sand, were amongst the events of the morning. Artists, geographers, reporters, photographers, naval officers, and blue-jackets, all got ashore as best they could; no mishap occurred, and to everyone who had not got on his best clothes, and did not mind a wetting, this novel way of arriving on shore was more amusing than otherwise. The men were marched to a newly-erected flagstaff, and the flag was hoisted in the usual way, royal salute from the ship, *feu-de-joie*, and three cheers, but the loss of the band was much felt, and our morning 'mèhè,' as we call it, after the Fijian way of expressing any ceremony or dance, seemed rather flat to our now trained

ears. No pictures of Man Friday or other historic savages give one the faintest conception of a New Guinea native as seen at Motu Motu. I would describe some, but no one can imagine till he has himself seen it a man with three birds of Paradise on his head arranged with marvellous taste, thick bands of white shells laid across his forehead, a great striped shell between the eyes, and a long stick passed through the nose; in his ears a chain of tortoiseshell rings reaching to the shoulders; necklaces of four different kinds cut from shells or the teeth of a dog or wallaby; boars' tusks hanging like some huge locket on his chest as far as the broad waistband, which is painted red; red bands on the upper part of his arms, with yellow leaves hanging from them as far as the elbow till they meet the thick armlet of many bangles; more bands and leaves and flowers round the ankles complete this amazing toilet, which after all I have attempted to describe. Looking, however, at this man about town next morning, I felt he could never have justice done him on paper, and presently wished I could have him transferred just as he stood to Madame Tussaud's or the Westminster Aquarium.

The hoisting of the flag being over, and the proclamation read, while everyone was squinting to see whether the photographer was taking the group at that particular moment, a move was made for the boats, and the fun of the morning recommenced. Eventually all got safe on board, very wet and very hungry. The *Nelson* then steamed away for Port Moresby, from which place there may be a chance of this letter being sent.

ARTHUR KEYSER.

## The Whale.

(CETARCHETYPE.)

### II.

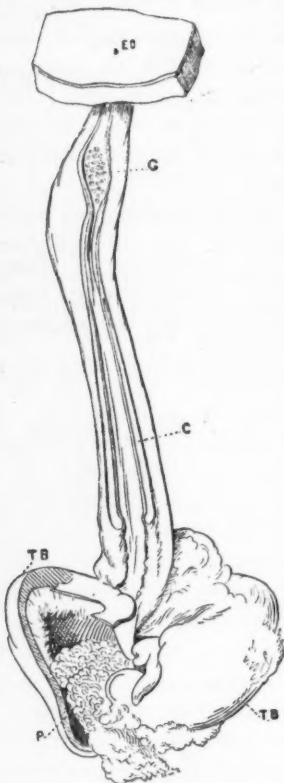
THE reader will remember that in mammals the air-tube, in the middle of which are situated the organs of hearing, is divided into two parts. That which passes to the outside of the head is called the external passage, or 'auditory meatus,' while that which opens into the back of the throat is called the Eustachian tube.

In terrestrial mammals the auditory meatus is wide, so as to admit a large column of air for the purpose of communicating its vibrations to the tympanum, while the Eustachian tube is quite small. With the Cetacea, however, the diameter of these tubes is reversed. The auditory meatus is extremely small—so narrow, indeed, that the external aperture will scarcely admit an ordinary carpet needle, and can only be discovered by a practised anatomist. Thus only a very slight column of water can act upon the internal ear.

The diagram illustrating this passage is taken from a specimen in the College of Surgeons. Its catalogue number is 1584.

The tiny external orifice is marked E.O. The little spots marked G are the 'ceruminous glands'—i.e. those

which secrete the so-called 'wax' of the ear; C shows the gristle or cartilage, that has been severed so as to show the interior of



Auditory Meatus.

the canal. As before, the letters *TE* signify the tympanic bones, one of which is left untouched, and the other cut open, so as to show the internal arterial plexus, marked *P*.

The Eustachian tube, on the contrary, is very wide, and opens into the blow-hole. Therefore, when the whale is totally submerged, the vibrations of the water are not too powerful for the auditory organs, while, when the animal lies on the surface, it can at the same time hear aquatic sounds by the submerged external ear, and aerial sounds by means of the Eustachian tube and blow-hole.

That the whale can hear through the Eustachian tube may seem rather a strange statement, but it is perfectly true. We ourselves can do so to a limited extent. Partially deaf persons instinctively open their mouths while listening, as indeed we all do when we are intent upon some discourse. Shakespeare, in a well-known passage in 'King John,' has noticed the fact.

'I saw a smith stand at his hammer, thus,  
The whilst his iron did on the anvil cool,  
With open mouth swallowing a tailor's news.'

Few of us are aware why we open our mouths under these circumstances, but the fact is, that we do so in order that we may hear through the Eustachian tube as well as through the auditory meatus.

In connection with Respiration comes the Circulation, and another problem to be solved.

The whale is obliged to possess the power of remaining under water for upwards of an hour at a time. But it is a warm, not to say hot-blooded animal, and therefore may not be furnished with gills, inasmuch as it could not extract from the water sufficient oxygen for the purification of the blood. It is a mammal, and therefore must breathe the external air by means of lungs as all other mammals do. How then can it be enabled to hold its breath for an hour?

It might be suggested that the animal should possess a reservoir of air, like the dytiscus, the notonecta, and other subaquatic insects, which it could breathe while it was under water.

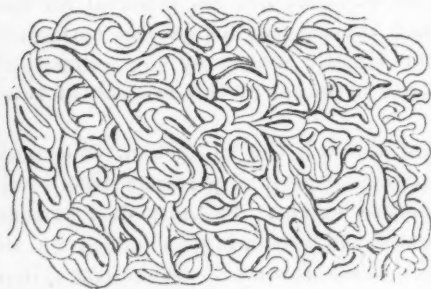
Insects, however, are not warm-blooded vertebrates, and a very little air will serve them for a long time. But if the whale were to be furnished, like these insects, with a reservoir containing air sufficient to support its life only for half an hour, its bulk would be so enormous in proportion to its weight that it would

not be able to force itself below the surface. All idea of an air-reservoir must therefore be abandoned.

Supposing, however, that, instead of carrying a reservoir of air, wherewith to purify the blood, the animal could be furnished with an equivalent reservoir of blood already purified, and that the

new blood could be gradually substituted for that which had become effete, the problem would be solved.

This is precisely what we find in whales, and the structure is called the 'intercostal plexus,'—i.e. the web between the ribs.

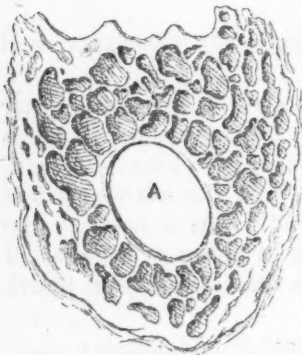


Intercostal Plexus. (Surface.)

It is formed from the intercostal arteries, which divide and subdivide, and subdivide again, and are wrapped backwards and forwards on each other just like macaroni before it is boiled. The upper illustration is drawn from a specimen in the College of Surgeons. Its catalogue number is 939 H.

This wonderful plexus lines the walls of the thorax, surrounds the spinal cord, and forms a thick mass just where it starts from the brain, so that the quantity of blood contained in the vessels is enormous.

The specimen in question was taken from a bottle-nosed whale (*Hyperoödon rostratus*). It represents a part of the surface of the plexus, and the reader will notice that nothing is seen but the loops formed by the blood-tubes, no ends being visible.



Intercostal Plexus. (Section.)

Close to this specimen is another, which was taken by Professor Flower from a Greenland whale, and given in section. In this dissection the large aperture denotes one of the intercostal arteries, marked A, and the small apertures which surround it are the severed tubes which constitute the intercostal plexus. Both these illustrations are given of the natural size.

Although in no other animals is there so complete a system of interlacing vessels, yet in many there is an analogous structure. This was well known to the older anatomists, who called it by the appropriate name of *rete mirabile*—i.e. wonderful net. It is found just at the base of the skull, the internal carotid arteries dividing and subdividing into a number of smaller branches, which unite here and there with each other ('anastomose,' as anatomists say) so as to give the net-like appearance to which its name alludes.

The whale possesses in some wonderful way the power of aërating this blood supply, and then putting it away until it is wanted—'turning off the tap,' if I may use such an expression. For this purpose it has to go through the process of 'spouting,' or 'blowing,' as it is called by sailors.

The process is apparently as follows.

Having 'turned on the tap' connecting the intercostal plexus with the lungs, it takes a series of very deep inspirations, and as many powerful expirations, so as in the first place to fill every lung cell with air, and in the next to empty each cell completely of the air which has done its work in blood purifying. I assume that the readers of this magazine understand the function of respiration, and therefore do not enter into minute detail.

Some of my readers are probably acquainted with the philosophical, though scarcely grammatical, lines of a politician when in prison:—

'And, like those sages who would drown a fish,  
I am condemn'd to suffer what I wish.'

Now it is perfectly easy to drown a fish, as all anglers know. It is as necessary for fish that the water should pass over their gills as for animals of higher organisation that the air should pass into their lungs. So, when an accomplished angler has hooked a powerful fish, he tries to keep his captive with its head pointing down the stream, so as to lessen as far as possible the flow of water over the gills, and to weaken the fish by stopping its respiration.

It is still easier to drown a whale, and, in fact, the animal must be more than half-drowned before the lance can be used. A very curious exemplification of the fact occurred some years ago.

A whale had been harpooned, and had dived perpendicularly—'peaked' in whaling language. The whale remaining below

far beyond the usual time, the men thought that it must have died from its wound, and signalled for the ship.

The line, after being passed on board, was carefully hauled up, and after a while up came the dead body of the whale. But there was no sign of the harpoon, and on further investigation the line was found to be jammed at the back of the whale's mouth, and twisted round its body. Whales, by the way, will sometimes roll over and over when struck, just as an old and experienced salmon will do when hooked.

After unrolling the whale from the line, the men found that no harpoon was attached to it, and that the rope, after passing through the animal's mouth, hung downwards, and quite taut. Hauling again upon the line, they brought to the surface the whale which had been struck, and in whose body the harpoon still kept its hold.

The fact was, that both whales were drowned. After the first whale had descended, the second must have come across the line while feeding with open mouth. Then, feeling the unexpected sensation of a rope at the back of its mouth, it must instinctively have closed its jaws, and tried to shake off the unknown intruder by rolling itself over and over. In doing this, it would prevent the first whale from rising, when its breath was exhausted, and so the animals managed to drown each other, and to afford to their captors the unique spectacle of two dead whales hanging on a single line, one uninjured, and the other without the infliction of a mortal wound.

During the spoutings, the moist and heated air from the lungs is blown upwards with great violence, and, when it comes in contact with the cooler air, condenses and falls in drops like those of rain. Most of us who have travelled by railway in cold weather must have noticed that the carriage windows often look as if a heavy shower of rain were falling, whereas the apparent rain is nothing but the condensed vapour from the funnel.

As a small amount of water will occupy the respiratory tube, this is blown out at the first 'spout,' and often gives the idea that the whale flings water instead of air from the blow-hole, and produces symmetrical fountains such as are invariably represented by shore-going artists when they try to draw the whale in its own element. They really seem to think that the whale is perpetually taking vast quantities of water into its mouth, and then forcing it through the blow-holes.

Each of these respirations lasts about ten seconds, and with

the cachalot from seventy to eighty, or even more, are required before the process is completed. When the entire reserve stock of blood has been fully aerated, the whale 'turns off the tap,' and then lies quietly at the surface, merely breathing sufficiently to sustain life.

A somewhat analogous power is possessed by the camel, which can keep a reserve stock of water shut up in a series of cells, and 'turn on the tap' whenever needful.

I may here mention that there is no difficulty in distinguishing the cachalot from the Greenland whale, even though they should be in the same water, and at considerable distances from the spectator.

In the latter animal the blow-hole is double, and placed on the top of the head, as we shall presently see. The spout-column is therefore double, and rises perpendicularly. But in the former the blow-hole is single, and the spouting is directed forward, thus affording a means of identification that is beyond the power of mistake.

The external aperture in this whale is of a rather curious form, being shaped almost exactly like the sound-hole of a violin, or the letter *f* without the cross.

To a small degree, man can imitate the whale.

From time to time public performers appear, sometimes men and sometimes women, who have the faculty of remaining under water for an abnormal length of time. If any of my readers like to try the experiment of holding his breath for even one minute he will find that the second-hand of his watch will appear to go very slowly after the first thirty seconds, and that the time occupied between forty-five and sixty seconds is unconscionably prolonged.

Yet these performers will remain submerged for three full minutes, a time which is sufficient to drown ordinary persons. They attain their proficiency by constant practice in dilating the lungs to the fullest degree, and do it as follows:—

The reader may not be aware that in ordinary respiration we only use a portion of our lungs, the cells at the extremity not being brought into play. This is the reason why those who are not 'in training,' and who try to run for any distance, soon begin to gasp, and unless they are courageous enough to persevere in spite of the choking sensation, are forced to stop. But if they will persevere, the choking goes off, and the result is what is technically known as 'second wind.'

When the second wind is fully established, the runner does not become out of breath, but goes on running as long as his legs will carry him. I know this by experience, having been accustomed for some years to run three miles every morning over a very hilly road.

The fact is, that on starting, the farthest portions of the lungs are choked with effete air, and the remainder do not supply air enough to meet the increased circulation caused by exercise. By degrees, however, the neglected cells come into play, and when the entire lung is in working order the circulation and respiration again balance each other, and the 'second wind' is the result.

Now let the reader repeat his experiment of holding his breath against time, but first let him force out of his lungs every particle of air that he can expel, and then draw as deep a breath as his lungs will hold. If this be repeated some seventy or eighty times, by way of imitation of the whale, the experimenter will find that he can hold his breath for a minute and a half without inconvenience. Should he be a swimmer, he should always take this precaution before 'taking a header,' and he will find that he can swim for a considerable distance before he needs to rise for breath.

The tubes which form the intercostal plexus of the whale being arterial in their origin, have necessarily no valves, and it is a remarkable fact that even in the veins the valves are few and far between, so that the blood is retarded in its course while respiration is suspended. Beside the arterial plexus vessels which have been described as occupying the thorax, there are similar masses of venous vessels in the abdomen, so that the subsidiary blood supply is distributed through nearly the whole of the body.

The volume of blood being so enormous, the power which drives it must be proportionately great.

I have had the opportunity of assisting at the dissection of a whale's heart, and though the specimen from which it was taken was by no means a large one, the task of dissecting seemed almost too much for us. A slice about an inch in width was cut from the aorta, or principal artery, and carefully dried. It really looks very much like a child's hoop, as any one may see who visits the Anatomical Museum at Oxford.

It is calculated that with an ordinary sized whale, say one of only forty or fifty feet in length, at least fifteen gallons of blood are propelled in each heart-beat. With animals of larger dimen-

sions the amount must be proportionately increased, as is shown by an anecdote related by the late Frank Buckland.

He mentions that in 1830 a cachalot measuring seventy-five feet in length was washed ashore at Whitstable. While the dissector was engaged in getting out the heart his foot slipped and he fell into one of the 'ventricles'—*i.e.* the lower cavities of the heart. Thence he was sliding into the aorta, and, if he had not been pulled out, would assuredly have been suffocated.

After his rescue, he cut some rings from the aorta, such as I have already mentioned, and found that he could easily slip them over his shoulders. The story really reads like an extract from 'Gulliver's Travels,' but has the advantage of being a true one.

Necessary as is the double plexus system to the normal life of the whale, it really affords the means by which man is enabled to kill the animal and use its body for his own purposes. If we place a man of ordinary height beside a large whale it would seem impossible that so insignificant a being should be able to destroy an animal of such gigantic size and apparently irresistible muscular powers; especially when we remember that the greatest part of the whale's body is always submerged, and therefore, protected by the water.

As was the case when treating of the ear, we must leave the plexus for a while and proceed to another portion of the structure.

In the last number of this magazine (page 404) it is mentioned that one of the problems connected with the whale's structure was its power of resisting the pressure of the water at the tremendous depths to which it descends, and in which any other mammal would be crushed.

The reader is of course aware that the whale is taken by means of a harpoon, to which is attached a rope or 'line,' of no great thickness, being only seven-eighths of an inch in diameter, but of enormous strength. The length of the rope is as nearly as possible two-thirds of a mile, and a whale has been known to dive perpendicularly, taking with it no less than three successive lines, one attached to the other.

Now it has more than once happened that a whale has carried out the line so rapidly that there has been no time to cut the ropes, much less to bend on a second line. The whale therefore carried with it the boat, leaving the crew to swim for their lives. Afterwards, when the whale was obliged to return to the surface, harpooned again, and finally secured, the boat was recovered, still hanging by the line to the dead animal.

It was then found that the water had forced its way through the paint, tar, and pitch of the boat, and permeated the solid timbers so completely, that when a splinter was cut off and thrown into the sea it sank like a stone. Yet the whale, which had descended two-thirds of a mile deeper than the boat, was quite uninjured by the superincumbent weight.

The reader may also remember that another of the many problems which beset whale life was the necessity of preventing the warmth of the body from being dissipated in the cold water. Both problems are solved by the peculiar formation of the skin. We will take the latter problem first, and illustrate it by two other warm-blooded animals, namely, the bird and the mole.

The bird, which is the aerial converse of the sub-aquatic whale, consumes a wonderful amount of air in proportion to its bulk, and consequently combustion is rapid, and the temperature of the blood raised accordingly. Now birds are intended for rapid passage through the air, and consequently would part with their heat unless they were protected by some non-conducting material. Such a material is found in the feathers, which belong to no other order of beings at present existing on the earth.

Not that the feathers are, in themselves, non-conductors of heat, but they entangle among their fibres a quantity of air, which is the real non-conductor. We all know that when a redbreast comes pitifully to our window during a severe frost, and waits until some kind hand will let him in, the bird, instead of pressing its coat of feathers closely to its body, invariably puffs them out so that it looks like a mere ball of feathers with a black beak and two large dark eyes above, and two slender legs below.

The fact is, the bird puffs out its plumage so as to entangle as much air as possible between its feathers, and thus to increase the thickness of the non-conducting material.

Now we will take the mole, whose structure is, in many points, assimilated to that of the whale. One of the most fiery, most voracious, and most active mammals that now exist, and therefore possessing exceptionally hot blood, the mole passes nearly the whole of its time in the cold, damp earth, which would absorb the heat from its mammalian body, just as the air would withdraw it from the bird.

Being a mammal, the mole may not possess a coat of feathers like the bird, and it is therefore furnished with a thick, velvet-like coat of soft fur. Each hair is smaller at the base than at the extremity, and is therefore especially fitted for the entangle-

ment of air. But the whale can neither have fur nor feathers, and its protective coating must therefore lie immediately beneath the surface of the body, and not outside it. Now, fat is one of the best non-conductors of heat, and so the place of feathers or fur outside the body can be taken by a corresponding layer of fat inside it.

This non-conducting layer must necessarily guard the whole of the body except the tail and the covering of the flippers, which are nothing more than gristle covered with skin.

Here, however, we are met by a double difficulty. If the fat layer were solid, the outer portion of it would harden by contact with the cold water, and destroy the flexibility of the body; while, if a layer of liquid fat or oil were interposed between the skin and the muscles, it would all run out if the skin were wounded, and leave the whole animal unprotected.

These difficulties are surmounted by a remarkable modification of the skin itself, which not only forms an efficient non-conductor of heat, but serves as a protection against the pressure of the water.

According to the usual mammalian type, the skin of the whale is threefold. On the outside is the 'epidermis,' or scarf-skin, which is thin, though tough. Next comes the 'rete mucosum,' in which are contained the pigmentary particles which give the colour to the skin; and lastly comes the 'cutis,' or true skin. This last layer is modified after a very remarkable fashion.

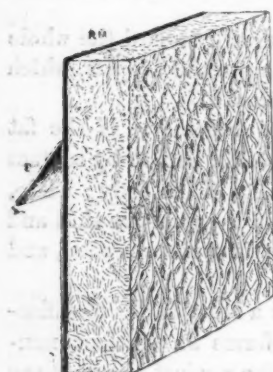
The fibres of the cutis, instead of being closely pressed together, as is the case with most mammals, are 'teased' asunder in such a manner as to leave a vast number of cells or vesicles. By this process the thickness of the skin is greatly increased.

In the tail and edges of the flippers there is no separation of the fibres, because the skin is wanted to lie flat—in the one case to be a propeller, and in the other to act the part of a fin. But as it approaches those parts of the body which contain the vital organs, the cutis becomes more and more expanded by the separation of the fibres and the consequent formation of vesicles, until in a fairly-sized whale it will be about two feet thick.

The bird and the mole are enabled to maintain their warmth by the entanglement of air among the hairs of the one and the feather-fibres (which are but modifications of hair) in the other. The whale preserves its warmth by the entanglement of oil among the separated fibres of the cutis, and so the same object

is attained for the aquatic as well as for the terrestrial and aerial animals.

Not only does the 'blubber,' as this modified cutis is familiarly termed, answer as a non-conducting envelope, but it enables the animal to resist the pressure of the water. Each of the countless



Section of Blubber.

elastic oil-vesicles gives support to and is supported by all those around it, so that we find here the very perfection of elasticity. Moreover, if the blubber be wounded, the oil will only escape from those vesicles which happen to be cut or ruptured, so that this curious oil-layer can be cut up and removed piecemeal without much loss of its contents.

The accompanying diagram is taken from a specimen in the College of Surgeons (catalogue number 1,853). The scarf-skin, or epidermis, is partly turned downwards. It is marked E. Next

comes the rete mucosum, marked RM, and then the thickened cutis, with its strange congeries of oil-cells.

It does not fall to the lot of many people to see blubber as it is freshly taken from the animal, but there are very few who have not seen the common *Medusæ*, or jelly-fishes, lying on the sands at low water. Bulky as some of these creatures are, there is scarcely any animal matter in them, the apparently gelatinous mass being almost wholly composed of water which is entangled among the finest imaginable network of fibres.

If it be exposed to the hot sunbeams, nearly the whole creature vanishes by evaporation, nothing being left but a mere film of animal matter. Yet the *Medusa* may be cut to pieces, or torn asunder, or pierced with a sharply-pointed instrument, and scarcely a drop of water will escape. Substitute oil for water, and we have a very fair analogue of the blubber, except that in the latter case the network of fibres is much coarser and stronger.

The oil-factory possessed by this animal is on the same gigantic scale as the blood-supply. Not only is the blubber kept full of oil, but the oil perpetually exudes through the skin into the water. In consequence, the whale is always surrounded by a variety of creatures which feed on this oil. Most remarkable among them are the Fulmar Petrels, or 'Mollies,' as the sailors call them.

These birds are constant attendants on the whales of the northern seas, patter over the surface of the water, and scoop up with their beaks the floating oil. The sailors have an idea that the Mollies live exclusively on the oil, but this is not the fact. The late Mr. J. Gould once lost overboard a piece of parchment measuring ten inches by six, and stuck full of salmon hooks. On the following day he caught a Molly with a hook baited with fat, and found inside the bird his missing parchment with its store of hooks.

Still, the exuding oil of the whale does form a considerable amount of the aliment of many birds, and affords a striking example of the wonderful provision by which food is given to all flesh.

Having now seen some of the details of the whale's structure, we can understand how so insignificant a being as man can kill the gigantic whale.

On an average the height of a full-grown man is nearly one-sixteenth of the length of a full-grown whale; or, in microscopic language, he must be magnified sixteen diameters in order to equal a whale in bulk. This does not sound very much, as abstract numbers, unless supplemented by sight or touch, are very misleading. But if the reader will take the figure of the whale on page 406, measure off the sixteenth of its length, and then draw a man of that height, he will appreciate the enormous discrepancy between the two beings.

I have already mentioned that man even in a state of partial civilisation cannot kill the whale, and we shall now see why this is the case. The mode in which civilised man destroys the whale is briefly as follows. When the harpoon is fixed, the whale, which knows nothing of harpoons, or boats, or ships, or men, naturally fancies itself attacked by one of the many inhabitants of the sea which are apt to assail it, and dives as deeply as it can, in order to rid itself of its foe.

Having remained below as long as its blood-supply will hold out, it ascends to the surface in order to aerate the blood of the plexus. Judging from the angle of the harpoon line, the whalers know the direction which the animal has taken, and having previously counted the number of its spoutings, they can calculate upon the length of time during which it can remain below the surface.

As soon as it rises, another harpoon is driven into the animal, so that it is forced to dive again without being afforded time for repeatedly spouting. It can now only remain under water for a

much shorter time, and so by being driven under water before it can renovate its blood, it becomes so weak for want of breath that it rolls partly on its side and allows the boats to approach closely to its body.

The harpooner then substitutes for the former weapon a lance with a short, stout wooden handle, a very long and slight iron shaft, scarcely thicker than a man's little finger, and a wide, double-edged head kept as sharp as possible. This he plunges repeatedly into the animal, thus severing the vessels of the intercostal plexus. As these are arterial, and have no valves, while the whole of the venous system has but very few valves, the blood flows unchecked, and in a wonderfully short time, considering the vast size of the animal, the whale bleeds to death.

Now and then a whale manages to make its escape after being harpooned. Whenever that is the case, the animal has learned wisdom by experience, and if it should again be harpooned, takes very good care not to exhaust its powers by diving. So it remains on the surface of the water, where it can breathe at ease, and rushes along at full speed.

Three or four boats will sometimes be 'fast' to the same whale, and will be towed along with such speed that one of the crew is obliged to stand over the line with uplifted axe, ready to cut the rope at a moment's notice. The northern whales almost invariably make for the nearest ice-field and try to dive under it. In one instance, a Rorqual, which had been harpooned in mistake for a Greenland whale, rushed off with such unexpected speed that it shot under an ice-field before the line could be cut, and neither crew nor boat were ever heard of afterwards.

It is, by the way, fortunate for the whalers that the animal cannot turn its head or body, as, if it could do so, even civilised men would hardly be able to approach such an animal. As it is, however, the well-drilled boat's crew have just time to back out of reach of the tail before it can make its stroke.

For it must be remembered that sensation occupies an appreciable time in passing along a nerve. All of us who have suffered from an accident must be aware that at the moment of infliction there is no pain, and that there is an interval between the injury and the pain. The duration of this interval is measurable by the length of nerve between the seat of injury and the brain.

Now, the whale is a very large animal; and supposing that a full-grown specimen of eighty feet in length be struck about the middle of the body: the sensation of the stroke would have to

be conveyed through nerves nearly forty feet in length before reaching the brain. Then, the return message delivered to the tail would have to traverse nearly twice that distance. So, although the whalers may be wholly ignorant of physiology, they know by practice that the whale never strikes instantly on receiving the wound from the harpoon.

Shell-bullets, charged with prussic acid or strychnine and just enough powder to explode the shell, have been found to kill a whale in a very few minutes. The sailors, however, with all the prejudices of ignorance, think that they will be poisoned when flensing the whale, and so insist upon the tedious and dangerous system of harpooning and lancing.

As to the sense of smell, some anatomists have stated that the whales do not possess it, and that the olfactory system is altogether wanting. This is true of the toothed whales, but not of the baleen whales, for, although those whales have but little need of the sense of smell, they have some need of it, and therefore possess it in proportion to their wants.

It has been noticed that whales always swim against the wind, just as wild herbivorous animals always walk against the wind while feeding. In the latter case, their object is to be warned by their sense of smell of the presence of a foe, and it is but natural to infer that a similar object is attained in the former case.

The cachalot is a gregarious animal, as many as five hundred having been counted in a single 'school,' or herd. They seem to be tolerably good-natured beings, though now and then there is a 'rogue,' which, like the similarly-constituted elephant, makes war against every being that comes in his way. One of these creatures was well known as 'Fighting Tom;' and, as a large cachalot can bite a boat asunder with a single snap of its enormous jaw, his death was a matter of general rejoicing.

As is the case with most gregarious animals, the adult males are apt to fight with each other, so that there are few old cachalots which do not show the marks of many a combat. Sometimes they have been found with the lower jaw twisted on one side, and yet they evidently have been able to obtain their food in spite of their injuries.

Before parting with the cachalot, it will be necessary to make mention of the products which are needed by man.

In the first place, there is the spermaceti, which has already been mentioned, and which is so useful to us in many ways. Its

use to the whale appears to consist in its small specific gravity, which serves to render the head light enough to counterbalance its enormous bulk.

A large whale is expected to furnish about ten barrels of spermaceti, after it has been roughly purified by treatment with boiling water. Although the whalers only obtain spermaceti from the head, it is scattered over the body, and even in the blubber, being enclosed in small cavities. These, however, are far between, and are not large enough to repay the trouble of extraction.

Probably because the cachalot inhabits zones more temperate than those which are tenanted by the Greenland whale, the layer of blubber—called by whalers the ‘blanket’—is not nearly so thick as in the latter animal. It is seldom that the blubber of the cachalot exceeds a foot in thickness, being scarcely more than half that of its northern cousin. The oil, however—possibly because of the mixture of spermaceti—is of better quality than that which is furnished by the Greenland whale.

The last valuable product of this whale is the remarkable substance called ambergris—*i.e.* grey amber. Until late years, ambergris could only be found floating on the surface of the sea, the coasts of Africa, Brazil, and the Bahamas being the usual localities for it.

The colour of ambergris when broken is ashen grey, mostly clouded with a reddish hue, and diversified with irregular streaks of yellow and black spots. On the exterior it is black and shining, and looks as if it had here and there been daubed with pitch. It is mostly found in lumps varying in weight from half an ounce to a hundred pounds, or even more. As it is worth about a guinea per ounce, a large piece is of very great value; so that a party of sailors who once found a lump of fifty pounds weight, and knew the value of their discovery, deserted their ship and went home with their prize.

Ambergris has now been robbed of its mysteries, and is known to be unprosaically formed by a morbid condition of the intestine, and therefore each whale is carefully searched before the body is cut adrift after the blubber and spermaceti have been removed. Not one whale in fifty, however, produces a single ounce of ambergris.

The black spots which have been mentioned are the hard beaks of octopods which the whale has eaten, and which retain their shape after the soft flesh has been digested. The geological reader may remember that the beaks of cuttles have been found

within the bodies of certain fossil reptiles, thus showing conclusively what was the nature of their food.

There are several specimens in the College of Surgeons, one being a valuable object, as it is cylindrical, and retains the shape of the intestine in which it was formed.

Ambergris is little used in Europe, but in the East it is held in high reputation, partly as a perfume, and partly as a valuable ingredient in cookery.

HAVING cursorily traced the structure and life-history of the cachalot, or the type of the Denticete whales, we will now turn to the Greenland whale (*Balaena mysticetus*), the type of the Mysticetes. This name is derived from the Greek word *mustax* (pronounced 'moostax'), which we have incorporated into our language as moustache.

There are many species of Mysticetes, one of which, the rorqual (*Balænoptera boöps*) is the largest of all the whales, having been said to reach a length of one hundred and twenty feet. In 1832 a skeleton of a rorqual was exhibited at Oxford, and I perfectly remember being taken as a child to see it. The length of the skeleton was announced to be one hundred and two feet, and, if that measurement were true, the length of the living animal must have fallen but little short of a hundred and twenty feet. Whales, however, like slain salmon, tigers, lions, and other victims of human destructive skill, have a way of shrinking when the measuring tape is applied to them.

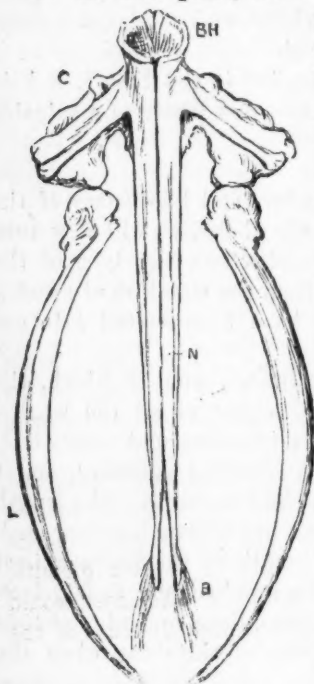
In all these whales there are no teeth in the lower jaw, while in the upper jaw the teeth are replaced by those unique horny flakes which go by the popular name of 'whalebone,' and are rightly termed 'baleen.' The object of the baleen, and the remarkable modification of the head, will now be seen.

In the seas which are the resort of the Greenland whale the great octopods which constitute the chief food of the cachalot cannot exist, and the only inhabitants of the water in which the whale can feed are of very small size.

Chief among these creatures is the odd little mollusc called *Clio borealis*, which seldom exceeds an inch in length, and usually is much less. It is evident, then, that the narrow lower jaw of the cachalot, with its great teeth set at some distance from each other, would be useless in the capture of such prey. It is also evident that vast numbers of the *Clio* must be taken in order to nourish so enormous an animal. Therefore, the structure

of the head must be modified, as far as concerning those portions of it which are used in the procural of food.

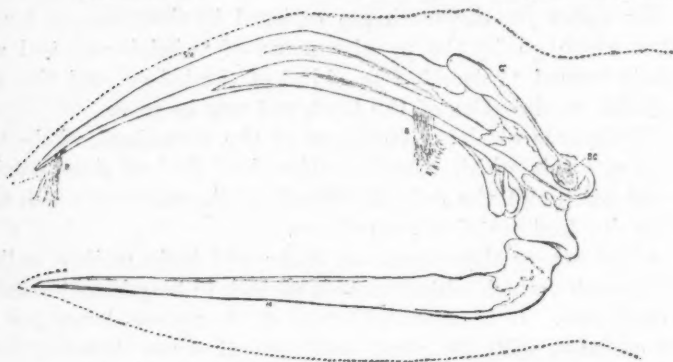
In the first place, the skull is exceedingly narrow and elongated, as is seen in the illustration;



(From above.)

which also shows the position of the blow-hole. Next, the cavity of the mouth must be greatly enlarged. The two halves of the lower jaw, instead of being pressed closely against each other, as in the *Denticete* whale, are strongly bowed outwards, much in the form of a parenthesis ( ). Then, the bones which form the upper jaw, instead of being depressed, flattened, and projected directly forwards, are curved upwards so as to form an arch. Here, then, is plenty of space, but as yet there are no means of enclosing prey within it. Its want is supplied as follows:—

The lower jaw is, as has already been stated, without teeth. But from the upper jaw there issue a series of long horny plates, called 'blades,' or 'flakes,' by the whalers. These flakes are comparatively short



Skull and Jaws of Greenland Whale. (From the side.)

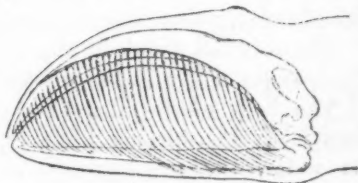
at the angle of the jaw and at the end of it, and are longest in the middle. In a fairly large whale the central flakes will

be about twelve feet in length, but in exceptionally fine specimens they are considerably longer. For example, some flakes of baleen in the Museum of Newcastle-upon-Tyne are sixteen feet in length, about a foot in width, and nearly two inches in thickness at the back. They always assume a slightly wedge-like form, such as may be seen in the blade of an ordinary pocket-knife, the edge of the blade being directed inwards, and only the back being visible on the outside.

Like the horn of the rhinoceros, the baleen is nothing but an aggregation of hairs, and if it be boiled for some time and then beaten with a mallet, it can be resolved into a mere tuft of bristles. In its natural state the thin edge of each flake, as well as the tip, is naturally broken up into its component hairs, so that it forms a sort of bristly fringe which lines the sides of the mouth. There are about two hundred and fifty of these flakes on each side of the upper jaw, and they are set so closely side by side that an ordinary playing-card can scarcely be inserted between them.

Thus we have the cavity of the mouth enclosed within a vast triangular cage of baleen, the loose fibres on the interior surface forming a far more perfect hair sieve than can be found in the best appointed kitchens. This living sieve is of such gigantic dimensions that, according to the sailors, a whaleboat would be able to row in it without the oars touching the sides of the mouth.

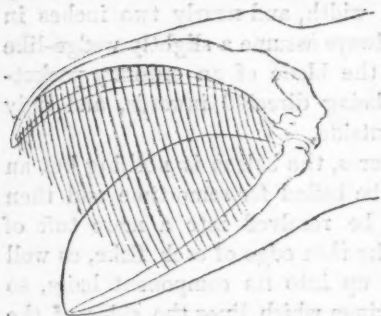
As a rule, we only know the baleen in its dried state, and can therefore form but little conception of it as it appears during the life of the animal. It is then quite soft, far more elastic than in the dry condition, and not in the least brittle. If we take a strip of dried baleen (such as is beloved by milliners and hated by physiologists) and try to bend it double, we shall find that it will crack at the point of tension, and that its elasticity has greatly vanished. Indeed, one of the chief complaints against corsets is that the 'bones' are apt to give way.



Whale with closed mouth.

But, during the life of the animal, the baleen is as unbreakable as if it were made of india-rubber, and is nearly as flexible. So, when the mouth of the Greenland whale is closed,

the baleen bends backwards, as shown in the illustration, the ends being received into a deep groove. But as soon as the whale opens its mouth the baleen springs forwards by its own elasticity,



Whale with open mouth.

so that it entirely closes the space between the upper and lower jaws.

This remarkable piece of animal mechanism was discovered by Captain David Gray, at the instigation of Professor Flower, and the two sketches here given are reduced from Mr. Flower's own drawings. I take this opportunity of expressing my obligations to Mr. Flower for his uniform courtesy and readiness to give every assistance that lay in his power when I was working at this and other subjects.

It is a remarkable fact that the whale-cub, when first formed, has no baleen, and, indeed, it does not need it, milk being its food, as it is that of all young mammals. After a while 'milk' teeth appear, just as in man. In due time they are absorbed; but, instead of being replaced by permanent teeth, the plates of baleen are substituted for teeth.

This may seem strange to many of my readers, but in reality there is nothing at all strange in the substitution of horn for teeth, or *vice versa*. Both are produced by the skin, as are hair, feathers, spines, claws, hoofs, scales, and nails. I have now before me a series of specimens taken from mammals, birds, reptiles, and fishes, in which the various stages of the transition from hair and feathers to scales and teeth are so gradual that it is impossible to draw a line of demarcation between the links of the chain.

There is one point in the nourishment of the young whale which ought not to be left wholly unnoticed.

The baby whale must obtain its food by suction, as in all mammals. Considering, however, the pace of the whale through the water, the usual process would be not only inconvenient, but almost impossible. So the mother possesses the power of violently forcing out the milk, thus injecting instantaneously the entire meal into the stomach of the young.

The mode by which the baleen is formed is admirably

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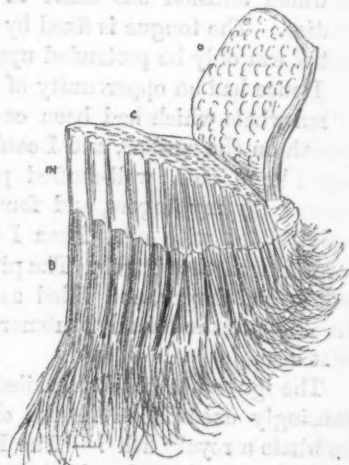
The mode by which the baleen is formed is admirably

exemplified by a preparation in the College of Surgeons (catalogue number 323).

Each plate of baleen has its root set in a soft structure permeated with blood-vessels, and termed the 'vascular nidus,' marked *vn* in the illustration. Corresponding to each plate there is a cavity in the vascular nidus (marked *c*), and into each of these cavities there passes a 'papilla,' which, in fact, is the real source of the baleen.

These papillæ, or 'pulpæ,' are marked *r*, and the baleen is designated by its initial. In the preparation the upper portion of the vascular nidus is raised up, so as to show the papillæ as they appear when withdrawn from the cavities.

The market price of baleen is exceedingly variable, depending on the fashion of the day. It is not so valuable now as used to be the case some years



Section of Baleen.

ago, steel having superseded it for many purposes. The price may range from 500*l.* to 850*l.* per ton, and a good whale ought to produce about two tons. In 1814 a single vessel sold her cargo of baleen and oil for 9,568*l.*, but such times are not likely to return. Mineral oils have now supplanted train oil for many purposes, and perpetual hunting has diminished the numbers as well as the size of the whales, no animal having a chance of attaining its full dimensions before it is harpooned. Often, nowadays, a whaling ship returns 'clean'—*i. e.* without having captured a single whale—so that, what with the lessened prices and diminished numbers and dimensions of the animals, whaling has become almost a lottery instead of a solid investment of capital, and few shipowners care to run such a risk.

Furnished with its wonderful horny sieve, the Greenland whale has no difficulty in procuring its food. With mouth more or less open it swims backwards and forwards through the shoals of the Olio, which mostly are found near the surface. The water escapes freely between the horny plates and lining fringe, while the animals are detained within the cage.

When it wishes to swallow the prey which it has caught it employs its tongue, which is not less remarkable than the rest of the whale's structure. The tongue is not free except at the base, as with mammals generally, so that it is impossible for the animal to protrude its tongue from its mouth as depicted in the diagram to which allusion was made in the earlier part of this short treatise. The tongue is fixed by nearly the whole of its edge, so that it can only be protruded upwards.

I once had an opportunity of examining the tongue of a small baleen whale which had been cast ashore. It was of great size, smooth on the surface, and I could not help thinking that it was very like a soft, well-stuffed pincushion. I pressed upon its centre with my fingers, and found that a pit was formed which rapidly filled with oil. Then I took a hammer and pressed the head of it on the tongue. The pit formed by the pressure became deeper and larger, and filled so fast with oil that not only was the whole of the hammer submerged in the oil, but my hand and wrist also.

The ignorance which prevailed in former days on this subject is amusingly exemplified in the old document which constituted the whale a royal 'fish':—'The King himself shall have the head and body to make oyl and other things; and the Queen the tayl to make whalebones for her royal vestments.'

J. G. WOOD.

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### 'The Donna.'

THE EDITOR begs to acknowledge the following subscriptions:—

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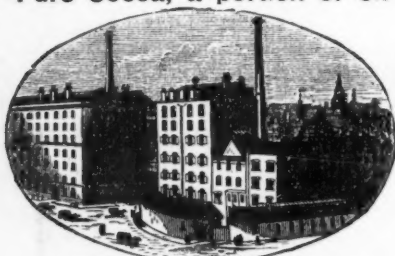
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